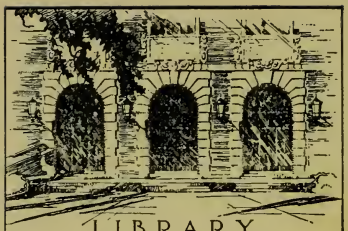

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# Anselmo;

OR,

# *THE DAY OF TRIAL.*

A ROMANCE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

MARY HILL,

*AUTHOR OF THE FOREST OF COMALVA, &c.*

To live with fame,
The gods allow to many; but to die
With equal lustre, is a blessing Heaven
Selects from all the choicest boons of fate,
And with a sparing hand on few bestows.

GLOVER.

VOL. II.

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# ANSELMO.

## CHAP. I.

Such is the weakness of all mortal hope,
So fickle is the state of earthly things,
That ere they come into their aimed scope,
They fall so short of our frail reckonings,
And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings,
Instead of comfort which we should embrace.

SPENCER.

ALONE, not attended even by a single domestic, did the count then proceed, and safely arrive at his own mansion adjoining the citadel. The structure of it was magnificent, and well accorded to the splendour of its interior decorations. In the grand hall, which was supported by

 noble

noble pillars of the Corinthian order, the senators had usually met to discuss with Anselmo on affairs of state. There too used to be seen ambassadors of various nations, delivering their credentials for the count's approbation, before they thought it advisable to lay them at the feet of their sovereign; and in this vast structure, this princely residence, which in former times was graced by many a courtly dame, where

> "The feast, the carol, and the dance,
> Minstrels and music, poetry and play,
> With balls by night, and tournaments by day,
> The goddess, Pleasure, held her sov'reign sway:"

There was Anselmo now obliged to enter in disguise, and even to announce his name before he could obtain admittance from his own servants.

In mute astonishment they conducted their master to his chamber, who, on dismissing them, gave orders to be awoke as early as five the next morning. The count

count then employed the intervening hours in penning an affectionate letter to his Almeria, urging the necessity of her retiring into Umbria. To enforce a ready compliance with which, a deranged state of his finances was particularly dwelt on as the ostensible motive.

From the general tenor of her life, and love of solitude, Anselmo had no doubt of the countess's compliance with this command. The epistle was then concluded by saying, that as her retirement would only be temporary, it was his wish that Eleanor should be sent immediately to the convent of Santa Maria, and there remain until his return to Valleroy.

To remove every fear respecting Albert de Montauban, whom he well knew cherished an extreme fondness for his *protegée,* and although supposed by the count to be actively engaged in the service of his country, yet he determined to send a written order likewise to the confessor Lodovico, to apprize him of

his resolution respecting her, and to forbid Eleanor's intercourse with any strangers; and further, that she was to be denied the permission of conversing even at the convent grate. Anselmo then wrote the following lines with a trembling hand, and extreme agitation :—

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"This severe prohibition to ensure the safety of Eleanor, and my altered intention to effect that first wish of my heart, in which you must be well convinced, Lodovico, I can only be actuated from the sincerest motives and tenderest affection for my lovely girl, whose future happiness it certainly behoves me to promote and ensure as much as is in my power; and had I before conformed to your advice, I think my mind would have been at ease, and the pangs I now suffer respecting her avoided. No more, however, of unavailing regret; the fatal secret which torments my soul must never

never be divulged. In you, Lodovico, have I trusted—let me not be deceived —continue to be my friend, but seek to know no more of my eventful life, than that in one cause Lodovico and Anselmo are alike interested and immutable. The inauspicious star that presided at my birth now lowers over my head, and foretells great changes. A few hours will decide my defeat or victory. If the former, imprisonment for life will be my portion—the latter, reversed on my enemies with never-ceasing vengeance.

"You say Montauban loves Eleanor—so do I. Be careful of your charge, Lodovico; should they ever again meet, tear them asunder—confine the presumptuous girl to her cell—feed her with bread and water—fasting, prayer, and rigid authority, will stifle the unruly passion, and bring her to a sense of reason. Should that, however, fail, you know my fixed determination, which, although it is severe, I am resolved on.

"By my orders, Almeria departs from Valleroy at the same period that Eleanor returns to your convent; I commit the care of the countess to my faithful steward, Rubinelli. Her son, the impetuous Albert, shall repent his boldness and disobedience. Never again shall he dare to enter into my presence, or his mother's; Almeria being my wife, is therefore subject to my will and pleasure. An enemy of mine must be considered as hers also. If one common interest does not bind the irrefragable sentence pronounced by each so solemnly at the altar, it is a profanation, by the decree of Heaven, and merits condign punishment. With the same fervency that I now love Almeria do I dislike her son. Albert de Montauban and Theodore Anselmo are irreconcilable foes. To me, Lodovico, is that proud stripling indebted for his prosperous advance into royal favour; through my recommendation he has likewise obtained distinguished marks of

honour

honour in that army which I have so often led to the field of battle, and conferred with glory; and for all this, these united endeavours of my zeal to serve the offspring of Almeria, am I requited only with the sting of ingratitude; and for my folly, laughed at, scorned, and insulted. It is through Albert de Montauban that I am now forced from my domains, to appear as a criminal at the court of Savoy. He is at the head of the foul conspiracy that seeks my destruction. One more capable of executing the black design is not to be found in the empire; yet let him beware of the revenge of an Italian. If the son of my wife becomes the public accuser of Anselmo, the whole united world to save the miscreant shall not screen him from my fury.

"I will not, however, longer dwell on the subject; for it is a weakness to complain of misfortunes where self-courage is only wanting to redress them.

"I expect Rodolphus in Piedmont the ensuing month; it was his intention to visit you at Santa Maria on his journey thither; I have just recollected the reason for it—to make a request (by desire of his lady) for the company of Eleanor, during her daughter's absence, for a few weeks, on a party of pleasure to Arrezzo. I believe they had my permission when at Oldenzo; I leave it to your judgment whether it will be proper to accord with that promise. Reverend father, I remain, with the most perfect esteem and attachment for your person, your knowledge, and excellent qualities, irrevocably yours,

ANSELMO."

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The count having carefully closed and sealed these letters for Tuscany, then awaited with extreme impatience the arrival of Lusignan.

About seven o'clock his steward entered

tered the chamber, and bowing profoundly, said, with great hesitation—

"My lord, I come to impart—"

Anselmo being only attentive to the former words, interrupted him by saying—"I am glad of it."

"My lord," replied the trembling domestic, in astonishment, "are you serious in what you have said?"

"Certainly I am; and no time must be lost in needless preparation; for on my return from the palace, you must instantly set off to Valleroy, and from thence to Santa Maria, with this packet for the confessor Lodovico. There will be further communications for you after I have consulted with my secretary, who I expect every moment."

Rubinelli could no longer remain silent—

"The signior is now in your house, my lord."

"Admit him then," hastily replied the count.

"I dare not—the officers of justice are in the hall, and will not suffer him to advance any further. They say, my lord, you are their prisoner."

The poor fellow, who read in the countenance of his master an expression of extreme despair at this intelligence, could not utter another syllable, even in answer to his question of—"Under whose authority they acted?" Anselmo, however, supposing the order must have received the royal signature, he determined to send his steward immediately into Tuscany, reflecting the least delay of executing that design might be dangerous.

In very few words, Rubinelli obtained his instructions to purchase the villa near Foligno for the residence of Almeria—to inform the reverend father Lodovico of this proceeding of the court of Savoy, in respect to his master—and to act only in concert with the confessor, whose commands Rubinelli was implicitly to

rely

to rely on and attend to; and then dismissing him, the count said—"Now I am prepared;" when instantly he descended into the hall, to meet his unexpected visitants.

## CHAP. II.

I will instruct my sorrows to be proud;
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE native pride, then, of Anselmo, however hurt, was not humbled by this new occurrence; and therefore, with peculiar dignity and natural firmness, he demanded of the officer to acquaint him with the motive of so singular and unjust a proceeding?

"The only information in my power to give you, my lord," he replied, "is my having received a peremptory order from the senate, that immediately on your arrival at Turin, we were to detain you in our custody, and no person to be admitted into your presence without having

ing first procured a grant from a senator."

"I have heard enough, sir; and as such is your mandate, I suppose I must submit. But where is my secretary?—what have you done with him?—is he likewise your prisoner?"

"No, my lord," replied the officer, to this question of the count's; "signior Lusignan, on hearing that you were put under an arrest, departed with much precipitation."

"That is as it should be," answered Anselmo. "I am obliged to him for thus early disclosing his true character. You will now perceive, captain, the truth of the following reflection—that adversity is the only test by which you may know a friend or an enemy: so farewell to my worthy secretary, signior Lusignan: and," continued he, in an ironical tone, "well, gentlemen, what can I offer for your amusement? Come,

come,

come, with your leave, we will adjourn into the saloon to breakfast—you shall not want for good cheer, depend on it;" which being readily agreed to, Luzzara, the head officer, and his companion, partook freely of the fare provided for them; and for some hours, by their facetious discourse, they relieved the count from the agony with which he was so deeply oppressed.

Rubinelli, who had been industriously employing himself in regulating the affairs of the household, before he set out on his secret expedition, now entered the apartment to hand more refreshments to these unwelcome guests; and on presenting some sherbet to his master, by a sign informed Anselmo every thing was prepared for his journey; which was then differently returned by the count, as a token of satisfaction of his steward's prudent conduct. Soon after, Rubinelli left the saloon; and by a private door

which

which led from the garden into the road, he mounted his horse, and set off for Tuscany.

In the evening, Luzzara, whose spirits were greatly exhilarated by the generous treatment he had met with from Anselmo; and being naturally of a more communicative turn of mind than his companion, he related to his noble prisoner the history of his life. Several of the adventures were not devoid of interest; the count therefore listened with much complaisance and attention to the following relation:—

"I am, my lord," said Luzzara, "a Sardinian by birth, belonging to the town of Cagliari. My mother was the only daughter of a merchant of that place, named Sorreno. This old man's happiness chiefly consisted in amassing riches for an intended son-in-law of his, a Polish nobleman, called Lovinski, who was very proud and very poor. His circumstances, however, were looked over by

by the merchant, in the consideration, that by uniting his daughter Isabel to his friend, it would aggrandize the name of Sorreno for ever.

"Love, my lord," continued Luzzara, with a deep sigh, "often makes sad havock in the human breast. My father, at that period, was employed by signior Sorreno as an amanuensis; hè likewise adored the youthful and beauteous Isabel; nor was his passion unreturned: she gave him so many unequivocal testimonies of her regard (which was heightened by the rash determination of Sorreno for his daughter's immediate union with the duke Lovinski), that Isabel consented to my father's proposal of eloping from parental tyranny. They embarked for Italy—a priest joined their hands—and the marriage of Luzzara and Isabel was publicly announced at Cagliari, to the great discomfiture of signior Sorreno and his friend, who had arrived in Sardinia only the day preceding the flight of the lovers.

"By

"By this fatal act, however, my mother was left portionless; for at the demise of her father, which took place soon after, the immense fortune of the merchant devolved, by his express command, to a sister that came to reside with him immediately on departure of his daughter, whose disobedience Sorreno never would pardon.

"Every hope was then at an end of Isabel being enabled to return with her husband into Sardinia; and as a situation offered for his acceptance in Paris, my father," continued the young man, "eagerly embraced it, and for many years supported my mother, whom he tenderly loved, although not in affluence, with a sufficiency to render her contented. From too excessive an application to study, however, his health declined; and the increasing expences of a young family so greatly depressed his spirits, that at length my father was obliged to give up the place he occupied.

"At

"At this distressing juncture, a friend of his particularly interested himself in our behalf, and procured Marsias, my eldest brother, then about nineteen, a situation in Sardinia."

"Marsias!" replied the count, with surprise; and continued—"Is he your brother?"

"Yes, my lord," answered Luzzara; "but more of him hereafter. I had a sister, lovely in person as in mind—she was consigned, at the age of twelve, to be companion to a lady who resided at Venice; from whose relations, however, we received, ere fifteen months had expired of her absence from us, the afflicting intelligence of Isabel having been taken, as well as her mistress, by a banditti, whilst on a journey to Verona; and although great rewards had been offered for any person who would explore the recesses of the mountains, in search of the unfortunates, strange to tell, although several years have expired since that

that miserable event, my lord," continued Luzzara, "they have never since been heard of."

"Your family has indeed suffered severe misfortunes, and commands the sincerest pity," said the count, much interested by the narration of Luzzara; who then continued—

"Ah, my lord! they were light in comparison to those that followed them. My poor mother fell a victim to the grief with which she was overwhelmed by the loss of my sister. On finding that her dissolution drew near, she requested me to approach the bedside, and read to her some prayers. To calm the agonies of an expiring saint, I performed the melancholy and afflicting mandate: and when the pious task was finished, which had been rendered almost inaudible by my frequent sobs, and the unutterable anguish that oppressed me on that miserable day I gently rose her fainting frame, and by her desire, supported her head with pil-

lows,

lows, that she might breathe more freely, and delivered to me her last injunction. Excuse these tears, my lord," said Luzzara to the count; "they ill become a soldier; yet whenever sad remembrance brings to my mind her hapless fate, they will flow in spite of all my endeavours to conquer so womanish a weakness; I shall never forget it. With clasped hands and uplifted eyes my mother implored Heaven to be merciful, and to forgive the errors of her youthful days. She then embraced me; and with faltering accents and beseeching looks, said—'I pray you console and comfort the declining days of your venerable father. I grieve only for my husband—my affectionate Luzzara,' she continued; 'for at his aged years, my tender care is most required to soften the pangs, and heal the wounds inflicted on him for the loss of my darling Isabel; therefore I conjure you, if you ever hope to enjoy the happiness of a mind at ease, and wish to

gladden

gladden the heart of your parent, never rest in quiet till you have found my Isabel—bear to her, as the last legacy of a dying mother, this kiss—say to her, my Cornelius, that I invoked every angel to protect my child; and——' More she wished to have said to me, my lord," continued Luzzara to the count, who had been listening with great attention to this affecting history, "but speech forsook her—a cold and deadly dew came over her face; another look my mother blessed me with—she then leant her head on my bosom, gave a short sigh, and the vital spark of life was fled for ever!"

Some minutes now elapsed before the young Luzzara could continue his narration. After, however, brushing away a few manly tears that rose to his eyes, whilst sorrowing for his departed parent, he went on—

"Ah, gracious Heaven! who can paint the scene that followed—the distracted feelings of my father, when at night, on his

his returning home, he found my mother a lifeless corpse! the physician having only in the morning afforded him hopes of her recovery. I must," continued Luzzara, "pass over it in silence; sufficient will it be for me to say, that so many accumulated woes fixed on his poor shattered brain a lasting derangement! For several days my father refused all kinds of nourishment, and it was surprising to every one that he continued to exist from so long an abstinence of food. Neither could I prevail on him to quit the room in which lay my deceased mother. For hours would he seat himself close to the bed, and converse with her as if she was still living. On the third day, the priest entered the apartment; in awful silence they prepared the last sad offices of strewing flowers on the body, placed it on the bier, and then departed with their sacred load.

"I do not think," said Luzzara to the count, "that my poor father was at all conscious

conscious of that afflicting ceremony, as his looks evinced the most perfect composure. On the representation of his friend (who had been unremittingly kind and attentive to our family), that he should, as soon as possible, be removed from France, and (as the only chance for his recovery) again breathe his native air, I lost no time in carrying that advice into execution. In a month after the lamented death of my mother, we commenced our journey to Marseilles, for the purpose of embarking for Sardinia; but on arriving at Avignon, I was obliged, for some time, to discontinue the journey, from the alarming increase of my father's malady. It was in vain that I endeavoured to procure apartments in the town—no person would admit us; and had it not been for the generosity of an English gentleman, my situation at that period would have been most distressing; he grieved for our misfortunes; and, as he was pleased to ex-

press

press himself, admired the filial piety with which I sought to relieve an afflicted parent."

Luzzara then continued to relate, in most pathetic terms, the benevolence of the stranger, who had supplied their wants, and relieved them from every difficulty, exclaiming — "Thrice fortunate was my introduction to that worthy man! who, on my informing him the difficulty I had in procuring a lodging, instantly offered one for our acceptance in his own residence, situated about half a mile from Avignon. I availed myself of the liberal invitation with the utmost gratitude; and in conducting my sick parent to the stranger's mansion, it is but justice to say, that we received from him all the hospitality for which the English nation is so truly and distinguishedly celebrated."

The evening now being far advanced, and the count's servants having entered the apartment to announce supper, Anselmo

selmo desired the officers would follow him into the saloon, to partake of the refreshments; and after it was finished, at the particular request of the count, Luzzara recommenced, and came to a conclusion of his history.

## CHAP. II.

Scarce the third glass of measured hours was run,
When like a fiery meteor sunk the sun—
The promise of a storm. The shifting gales
Forsake by fits, and fill the flagging sails.
Hoarse murmurs of the main from far were heard,
And night came on; not by degrees prepar'd,
But all at once. At once the winds arise,
The thunders roll, the forked lightning flies.

— — — — —

The wand'ring vessel drove before the wind:
Toss'd and retoss'd, aloft, and then below,
Nor port they seek, nor certain course they know,
But every moment wait the coming blow.

DRYDEN.

"THE family of Mr. Delaval consisted of a wife and two daughters; the eldest of the young ladies (named Horatia) had been

been for some years in a declining state of health, and was therefore advised by her physicians to come to the south of France; which was the reason of Mr. Delaval's residing in the vicinity of Avignon. Horatia is a beautiful girl—if you please, my lord, we will drink to her better health." The count smiled at this request, and impatience of Luzzara to have it assented to; who having drank the toast with enthusiasm, thus continued—"Whenever I think of that lady, my lord, all local evils are forgotten; and therefore, notwithstanding an insurmountable barrier presents itself (from the difference of our religion) to my being united to that lovely woman, I will never marry another, that I am determined on.

"For three weeks I experienced, as well as my aged parent, the politest attention from Mr. Delaval; and if it was possible I could erase from my remembrance the tender care and solicitude of Horatia, to alleviate the sufferings of

my poor father, I should deserve even more misfortunes than I have since endured, although, Heaven knows, they have been very great—almost unparalleled. I must not, however," he continued, "dwell too long on that happy period, or I may exhaust your patience, my lord. Through the benevolence of that family, therefore, my father's health was so much recovered, and his mind apparently so composed, that he was again enabled to proceed on his journey. It cost my heart many a severe pang to bid adieu to such kind friends; and the more so, from the conviction I felt that I should never again enjoy the pleasure of their society.

"The second day of our arrival at Marseilles, I learnt there was a vessel on the point of sailing for Sardinia. We embarked for Cagliari; and it was with indescribable pleasure that I found the nearer we approached it, a greater animation was apparent in the countenance of

of my father. I am convinced, if any earthly circumstance was possible to have restored him to reason, it would have been the agreeable surprise of again being wafted to his native home. Stern fate, however, decreed it otherwise. A tempestuous wind drove us to the north-east of Sardinia, near the island of Asinara. Our captain knowing the imminent danger with which we were threatened, ordered the dead-lights to be put up, and the hatches to be closed. None of the passengers were allowed to remain on deck but myself; having, some time previous to the command, got lashed to the rigging by one of the sailors, I was therefore able to assist them in working at the pumps.

"The storm was dreadful," said Luzzara, shuddering as he continued to relate the fatal effects of it; "the waves kept rushing over the vessel with tremendous violence. During the pause of a gust, although all was confusion and uproar amongst the hapless crew, I fan-

cied I could distinguish, above the rest, the voice of my father calling out to me for help. A heavy groan succeeded, and the name of Cornelius was repeated. I no longer doubted; and my fears then represented him to be in the agonies of death. In a paroxysm of despair, I instantly extricated my body from the rope with which they had secured me, and made my way, although I have not the least recollection by what means I effected it, to the great cabin, the door of which had been torn off its hinges by the furious element; and there, clinging to a part of the wood-work that had supported it, I found my father."

"That was a moment of trial!" exclaimed Anselmo, who, in listening to the sorrows of his guest, had almost forgotten his own.

"It was indeed, my lord," replied Luzzara; "for at that instant our ship struck against the rocks, and so rapidly filled with water, that all hope of saving her

shattered

shattered hulk was at an end. The long-boat was hoisted out—four of the passengers had entered it; by that time, with my parent in my arms, I contrived to gain the only remaining side that was left of the vessel, and implored them to admit my dying father—for as to myself I was quite indifferent; to save him was my only cry; I begged, entreated, but in vain—the boat departed. I and my poor father, with the captain, who could not be persuaded to leave the ship whilst there remained a hope of her riding out the storm, were then the last remaining persons on the wreck. With a resolution and strength, even beyond my years, and to which," continued the officer, "I now look back with astonishment, with the rope that I still held in my hand, I contrived to lash ourselves to the mast of the vessel; it parted from the wreck, and with the next wave we were thrown on shore. Not a moment, however, was to be lost in trying to be dis-

engaged from the bondage: with a knife I had in my pocket, I fortunately succeeded, and in an instant afterwards the mast again drifted out to sea.

"Our lives were thus saved, my lord," continued Luzzara, "from impending destruction. I dragged my nearly-exhausted parent from the danger of the merciless element, and having seated him in the cavity of a rock, knelt, and returned thanks to Heaven for our miraculous preservation; which so clearly demonstrated the truth of that beautiful and consoling moral to the human heart, that 'seeming calamities may, and often are found to be, real blessings;' for the boat, in which I had so vainly implored for admittance, sunk, and every soul perished.

"The captain, however, being an expert swimmer, had gained the shore in safety; and on observing us, humanely offered his assistance, and conducted us into the island. On our arriving at a small

small inn, (principally resorted to by fishermen,) the captain represented to the owners of it, by whom he was well known, our disastrous situation; and then desired that every attention should be shewn to us, as he would settle every thing to their satisfaction, on his return from Cagliari.

'I have hopes,' said this worthy man, 'of recovering, at low water, some of the property from the wreck; and you may depend on it, signior, that I shall use my utmost endeavours to recover your father's property.' I returned him many thanks for the intention," said Luzzara to the count, "although I could not be convinced there was any chance of success, from the high swell of the sea, and the wind blowing at that time so strong from the shore. In that, however, I was agreeably disappointed; for in a few hours, the captain, and some men belonging to the island, who had proffered their assistance, returned, and brought with

them three large trunks, which had been cast on the beach. One of them I fortunately recognized to be my father's, containing wearing apparel, with many other articles of value.

"By this act of Providence, my lord," he continued, "although great was our loss, we were not rendered quite destitute; it enabled me to procure little comforts for my aged parent, which I could not otherwise have obtained. On the following day, our captain set sail in a small fishing-smack for Sardinia; we were to have accompanied him, had not my father's malady so much increased from the fright he had received, that his recovery was hopeless."

"In many instances of mental derangement," said Anselmo to his guest, "such an alarm is supposed to have had a beneficial effect."

"Very often, however, it has proved fatal, my lord," replied the officer; who then went on to say, that as his parent could not be

be removed from Asinara, he entrusted to the care of the captain a packet, containing papers of consequence, which were to be delivered on his landing at Cagliari to a younger brother of his father, a respectable banker of that city; and enclosed was a letter from Cornelius to his uncle, informing him of the dangerous state of the elder Luzzara's health, and praying for a remittance, as their pecuniary resources would be soon exhausted.

Three weeks passed away without any intelligence, either of the captain or the sloop in which he had sailed for Sardinia. The pious son unremittingly endeavoured to soften the agonies of an afflicted father, who, Cornelius continued to relate to the count, expired in his arms without a groan, on the fourth week of their residence at the island of Asinara.

"New troubles then surrounded me," continued the officer; "my little finances were quite expended, and as I re-

ceived no account whatever from the captain or my uncle, I knew not where to procure sustenance even for another day. The landlord of the inn, an unfeeling wretch, acquainted me that if I did not pay his extortionate demand, he would instantly throw me into prison; and therefore to avoid so cruel a fate, at dead of night, with the same rope that had rescued me from a watery grave, and which I had carefully preserved, I contrived to fasten to one of the beams of my chamber, and throwing the rest from the window, with a small bundle of clothes, which was then all my worldly property, I escaped the persecution which was threatened me. Having got safely to the ground by that means, I lost no time in hastening to the sea shore, in the hopes of finding some boat or vessel that I could take my passage in for Cagliari.

"In wandering along the rocks till the dawn of day, fancying every moment, however, I was pursued by the inn-

keeper

keeper and his merciless crew, I found I had arrived exactly at the spot where we had been shipwrecked. Parts of the vessel still lay on the beach; and thinking it not unlikely that I might discover some more of my treasure, I commenced a diligent search along the shore. You may think it strange, my lord," said Luzzara, "after expressing to you the fears I had of imprisonment, that I should have thus spent my time in so useless a pursuit: it was not without its benefit. My mind being thus employed, it in some degree lessened the weight of sorrow with which I was oppressed; and as it was at a distance from the inhabited part of the island, I knew would serve (from the number of excavations in the rocks) as a good place of concealment in case of necessity. It likewise came to my recollection, that the trunks which had been found by the captain were still in the possession of my savage host; and therefore consoled myself that he would detain

them

them as an equivalent for his demand on me.

"That day, therefore, and the succeeding one, I occupied in that manner, and in endeavouring to procure fresh water; for having subsisted only on shell-fish, I was almost famished. The latter, however, proved fruitless; not a rivulet or spring was to be found. I then ascended the rocky heights to survey the country, in hopes of discovering some fisherman's hut, to which I could repair and obtain the relief I stood so greatly in need of. My strength was almost exhausted, and——"

"Dreadful was your situation!" interrupted Anselmo; "but I trust you soon experienced relief?"

"Thanks to Heaven I did, my lord!" replied the young man; "for in my walk for that purpose, I observed at a distance, with indescribable emotions of rapture, a ship apparently pressing on, under a croud of sail, for that part of the island.

Fearful,

Fearful, however, the mariners might alter her course, I loudly hailed them, and kept waving my handkerchief in the air as a token of distress. From the serenity of the weather, and an unruffled sea, I could distinctly hear the voices of the men on board, vociferating—'We are becalmed, captain, and shall not be able to bring her to an anchor till the morning.'

"They did not answer my signals; my heart again sunk within me, and I threw myself on the beach in despair. I had not been long in that posture ere I discovered something lying on the beach, which glittered with astonishing lustre: at first," continued Luzzara, "I supposed it to be the reflection of the sun on a fossil; but on rising, and observing it more minutely, I perceived it was a small gold box, inlaid with the precious stones of rubies, emeralds, and amethysts; and on the lid were engraved the letters

of

of E. C. R., studded with pearls. They were not the initials I had seen on the trunks at the inn; yet I concluded it must have belonged to one of the passengers that were with us in the vessel, and who had unfortunately lost their lives in the boat."

"That was a seasonable relief for you, signior."

"Not so, my lord," resumed the officer; "my conscience would not suffer me to obtain it by such means; and therefore the only pleasure I received on finding the treasure, was the thought that at some future period I might have the gratification of restoring it to the friends of the owner. Whilst I was admiring the brilliancy of the exterior appearance, it opened, (from my having unknowingly touched the spring.) and my admiration was then converted into astonishment," said the young man; "for the enclosed presented to my view a miniature

niature of one of the most beautiful of women the imagination could possibly delineate."

"Have you the picture now in your possession?"

"It is, my lord," said Luzzara, in no small degree of surprise, from the impetuousness of the count in asking the question; who continued—

"Then pray indulge me with a sight of it."

The officer replied—"With much pleasure, on his return to his apartments in the citadel."

Anselmo, on requesting pardon for the interruption of the eventful history, Luzzara then went on—"So flattering to me is your attention, my lord, that I cannot refuse acquainting you with the sequel of my adventures.

"The contemplation of so fine a *chef d'œuvre* of the art of painting, rendered me for a time forgetful of the distresses with which I was surrounded; the rapid approach

approach of night, however, brought me to recollection of the necessity of procuring sustenance and shelter. I was certain of the vessel being at safe anchor, and that it was destined for Asinara; yet I had not strength to continue my course in search of the relief I stood so much in need of, and therefore was obliged again to rest in a cavity of the rocks.

"From extreme weakness and distress of mind, although hard was my pillow," continued Luzzara, "I was not long sensible of the wretchedness of my fate. A profound sleep stole over my senses, and from which I did not awake until an unusual noise (for so retired a situation) disturbed my repose. On awaking, and looking around to discover the cause of it, judge of my astonishment and horror, my lord," said the officer, "when I found that it proceeded from the sea pouring into the cavern with tremendous violence, and no possible retreat appeared from its fury! The fear of an

approaching

approaching and certain death is natural to all of the human race—I felt it so. With the greatest difficulty I climbed up part of the cavern. I had but just ascended when an immense rush of the waters carried away the lower part of the rock on which I was standing. It was then, my lord," continued Luzzara, "I thought my sorrows were almost over, and my fate inevitable. In an instant afterwards the remaining structure of that part of the cave gave way, and I was precipitated into the sea."

"Great God!" now exclaimed the count Anselmo, at this dreadful relation of the officer's, "have you then risen from the dead?"

"I should almost have thought so, my lord," replied the officer, "had not a faithful friend assured me to the contrary; and that I have long since learnt nothing is impossible in the wonderful chain of causes belonging to the Divine Providence.

"The

"The vessel which I had seen on the preceding night, with her head moored to the shore, had, at break of day, sent some of her men into the island to purchase provisions. They had fastened their boat near to the point of the rock which had fallen with me; and at the time they were again embarking for their ship, on hearing my cries, and perceiving that I had risen in the water, and with my hands were imploring relief, one of the crew, with that humanity and courage which is so peculiar a characteristic of a British sailor, (for they were Englishmen,) instantly jumped into the sea, and swam to my assistance. He laid hold of the skirts of my coat, and brought me in safety to the boat. The poor fellow, however, almost exhausted, again would have been obliged to have consigned me to the merciless deep, had not his companions caught me just as I was sinking, and helped me on board as well as my brave deliverer.

"Thus,

"Thus, my lord," continued Luzzara, "was I a second time preserved from a watery grave. The dangers I experienced in that short voyage from Marseilles to and from the island of Asinara, gave me such a distaste for that mode of conveyance, that I solemnly vowed, if I once could set my foot on land, I would never attempt another. But to my story."

"With pleasure, signior, for I am greatly interested in it," said the count; "yet, as the night is now far advanced, and yourself much fatigued with the recounting of your adventures, I shall forego my curiosity to hear the remainder until the morning." The officer bowed acquiescence; and Anselmo, on conducting Luzzara and his companion to the apartment, said, on passing his own—"Now, gentlemen, if you are fearful I should wish to elude justice, by making my escape from Turin, here are couches in this room on which you may repose."

"My lord," replied Luzzara, "although,

though, as our prisoner, such is the strict letter of the law, yet, having so high an opinion of your honour, we shall dispense with that ceremony."

The count returned thanks for their confidence in him; and soon "tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," obliterated, for a time, their various sorrows.

CHAP.

## CHAP. III.

"I wake, emerging from a sea of dreams
Tumultuous; where my wreck'd, desponding thought,
From wave to wave of fancied misery
At random drove, her helm of reason lost;
Though now restor'd, 'tis only change of pain,
A bitter change, severer for severe:
The day, too short for my distress! and night,
Ev'n in the zenith of her dark domain,
Is sunshine to the colour of my fate."

At an early hour of the morn Luzzara and his companion awoke, greatly refreshed from their midnight slumbers; and on descending to the saloon, met their noble prisoner, whose haggard and desponding looks struck them with the sincerest pity; and the more so, on their inquiring

inquiring how the count had passed the night? was answered, "Very ill indeed. I have," he continued, "suffered, in imagination, the tortures of a Tantalus. Let not, however, my griefs disturb the harmony in which last night we parted. I likewise wish to be informed at what time of the day the duke is expected to be in Turin?"

"By the hour of four, my lord."

"It is well," replied the count. "Now then, signior Luzzara, favour me with recounting your escape from the island of Asinara." Having finished their repast, the officer therefore resumed his history:

"It is always with heartfelt pleasure that I dwell on the humanity I received whilst on board the Antelope, (the vessel to which I was conducted by the seamen who had saved my life, and to whom they belonged). In a few hours I recovered from my alarm; when on faithfully relating to their English commander the perils I had undergone, and the

the fear I had of returning to that island, on account of the inhospitable landlord of the auberge, he generously offered to settle his extortionate demand; and likewise, as the ship would touch at Cagliari, to carry me there free of every expence. This offer I eagerly embraced, from the wish I had of visiting the birth-place of my lamented father, and the satisfaction I should derive in an interview with my uncle, from whom I had not obtained any answer in return for the letter sent in the charge of captain Montebello. I declined going again on shore, thinking it more advisable to forward a remittance for the innkeeper on my arrival at Cagliari.

"At the expiration of a week," continued the officer, "the vessel sailed for that port. On my landing, I immediately repaired to the house of my uncle, and was received by him, on his learning my name and family, with unfeigned pleasure. I had the mortification of hear-

ing that he had neither seen nor heard of captain Montebello; and that the packet had not come to hand. The wind having been fair for several days after his departure from Asinara, I therefore began to suspect some treachery in the captain's conduct towards me, the letters being of the utmost consequence. My uncle deeply lamented the loss of his brother, for whom, although so many years separated, he had ever retained the tenderest affection. 'Cornelius,' said he, 'you shall never want a home whilst I have one; but as to Marsias——' — 'What of him, my good sir?' I quickly inquired. — 'He has,' said my uncle, 'within these few months, absented himself from his situation in the castle of Oristagni; such strange conduct causes suspicions of a very unfavourable nature, and——" Luzzara was continuing, but the count instantly interrupted him in that part of his narrative by saying, with peculiar sternness — "Have you now discovered

discovered the retreat of your brother?"

"For your sake, my lord, I am grieved to say we have not heard the least intelligence of him."—"At what period did he make his escape from Oristagni?"—"Five years has nearly expired since that event," replied Luzzara, and paused, as if fearful of continuing the relation. The features of Anselmo, however, assumed a more pleasing aspect, and then turning to his informant, said—"I request, signior, to hear the sequel of your history."

"Well, my lord, to be brief then," replied the officer, "I shall only say, that after the variety of misfortunes I had endured, I resided peacefully at the house of my uncle at Cagliari for several months; during which period, we heard that the fishing sloop, in which captain Montebello had embarked from Asinara, was taken by an Algerine corsair, and himself, with the rest of the crew, made prisoners, and carried to Africa. Thus ended all my

hopes of regaining the letters intrusted to his charge, or of ever having the satisfaction of repaying the many civilities I had received from him. It was a serious loss to me, for many of them belonged to the gentleman who in France had so generously exerted himself in behalf of my family; and therefore, supposing there was some duplicity on my part, he withdrew his friendship. I was left an entire dependant on my uncle's bounty. Young, thoughtless, and inexperienced, I had never applied myself to any kind of study, except that of reading old musty legends of warriors, who, by romantic deeds in arms, had acquired a deathless glory. My uncle perceiving I had an invincible objection for any commercial line of business, then offered to procure me a situation in the army. Nothing could be more accordant to my wishes or turn of mind than such a proposal. The unsettledness of my disposition loved variety; besides, I knew that visiting foreign

foreign countries, observing their manners, customs, and partaking of their amusements, would tend to divert the fatal passion I had indulged for Horatia. She had, with her father and mother, again embarked for England—that happy land; however, I could have no hopes of being able to follow them; and even if it were otherwise, the insurmountable barrier remained to prevent an union of felicity.

"In less than a month my uncle performed his promise, in obtaining my present commission in the Piedmontese army; and to you, my lord," continued Luzzara, with an humble obeisance to count Anselmo, "am I principally indebted for it."—"To me, signior?"—"Yes, my honoured lord," he resumed, "to you, although, perhaps from the lapse of time, and momentous affairs with the state, it may have escaped your memory."—"It has indeed," replied the count.—"Do you recollect the name of

Veroli, my lord?"—"Certainly I do. Is that gentleman your relation?"—"In truth, he was only half-brother to my late father from a second marriage. You will now then no longer be surprised, Gondolphe," said Luzzara, in addressing the other officer, "that I should have felt repugnant to take in custody, as a prisoner, the noble count Anselmo, from whom I have derived the benefits I at this very period enjoy."

"You have only done your duty, signior; yet, to a man of your liberal sentiments, I cannot help wishing you a more honourable employment."—"My lord, I return you my grateful thanks." "It is sufficient," answered the count; and desirous of interrupting his meditated vote of obligation, said—"Although I suppose you have now come to a conclusion of your adventures, signior, you have forgot to acquaint me of the fate of your lost sister?"

A heavy sigh from Luzzara succeeded this question of Anselmo's. He then replied—

plied—"All my endeavours to regain that treasure, my lord, have proved fruitless; I therefore pray to Heaven that my sister, dearest Isabel, the tender pledge left to my care by her dying mother, is now restored to a maternal bosom. If I thought otherwise, that she drew on her existence by dishonour, I should go mad. This arm might do a deed, to revenge the indelible stain, that would render life hereafter an insupportable burthen."

These agonized sensations of the young man, at the mention of his sister, whom he had so fondly loved, deprived him of further utterance. The romantic wildness of his character was not, however, displeasing to Anselmo, Luzzara having observed, throughout the whole of his relation, the most profound respect for his auditor; and therefore carefully avoided dwelling on the subject of the castle of Oristagni, which he well knew would have deeply agitated the feelings of count Anselmo.

The strange occurrences which had taken place in the island of Cagliari about that period, were yet wrapt in mystery. Many of the secrets of the prison-house could have been unfolded by the officer; but yet, as they could not have lessened the anxiety of the count, and must have implicated his brother in several of the transactions, Luzzara determined with him they should remain inviolably concealed.

A servant now entered the saloon to apprize his lord that a messenger was arrived from the duke of Savoy. "Admit him," said Anselmo. On the courier being ushered into the apartment, he delivered a sealed paper to captain Luzzara, and again departed. The officer shuddered as he perused the instructions the letter contained; and then presented it, with extreme reluctance, to his noble prisoner. It was a peremptory mandate from the duke to Luzzara, for count Anselmo to be conveyed from his mansion

into

into the citadel. An apartment for his reception was to be got ready immediately, there to remain till further orders; and no person to have access to him on any account whatever.

Anselmo having read this severe prohibition from his sovereign, exclaimed—"Such a resolution fits a Roman senate, but not the milder laws of Piedmont!" and then addressing himself to the officers, said—"I perceive, gentlemen, by this paper, you are authorized to treat me as a common felon."—"As vassals of the state," replied Luzzara, "we are obliged to perform our duty to our sovereign, or we should incur, for our disobedience, condign punishment. I have no power to alleviate your sufferings, my lord, but in recommending the healing plant of patience, to soften undeserved calamities. Malice may flourish for a while—the brightest star is oft o'ershadowed by the passing cloud; yet it will, guided by its

Omniscient Creator, at length break forth with undiminished lustre."

"I'll hear no more. Your flowing eloquence is now ill-judged, unsalutary," retorted Anselmo. "It cannot cure a distempered mind, nor change my destiny. In a loathsome prison am I fated to linger out my days, where even the light of heaven does not dare to enter; shut out from the intercourse of every friendly being—even that of my wife, and my only remaining supporter, signior Rodolphus. Oh God!" continued the enraged count, "that I should live to witness all my honours, the services I have done to my countrymen, fade away from their remembrance, and even assisting to plunge me headlong into the vortex of destruction!"

The tear of agony burst from his tortured soul, as he exclaimed—"Oh Almeria! to you am I indebted for all this variety of wretchedness! I have forfeited

forfeited the sacred vow I made to an expiring father — lost the estimation of my prince — and covered with disgrace the revered, the noble name of the house of Anselmo."

The feelings of the count being wrought up to desperation, he vociferously continued — "Come, soldiers, drag me to my prison—bind me in chains —I am now prepared to receive every indignity." — "Do not abandon hope, my lord," said Luzzara, with much commiseration.

"Hope is a cheat—it deludes where most it promises! My sun is set for ever—a long, long night of darkness has succeeded to chase away every idea of happiness." The count then sat down to write a few hasty lines to signior Rodolphus. On closing the note he said—"Am I permitted, gentlemen, to deliver this to my servant before I depart?" Gondolphe replied—

"It is not possible we can deny you that favour, my lord, although it is against our instructions."—"I thank you, signior. Now, then, I am ready to attend you."

On their passing through the great hall, the count gave the letter in charge of his valet, with an order for his instant departure to Oldenzo. The officers conducted Anselmo to the carriage, which was in waiting at the door of his mansion, with a strong guard to receive their prisoner.

Not a word was spoken. The dignified appearance of the count impressed the numerous assemblage with reverential awe. Anselmo likewise observed a guarded silence; and not until they had arrived within the precincts of the citadel, and immerged him within its gloomy walls, did he utter a single sentence. On hearing, however, the iron doors close as the officers departed, and on being

being left alone to think on the horrors of his dreadful situation, then Anselmo exclaimed — " Farewell liberty — welcome death !"

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

Ah, me! what hand can touch the strings so fine—
Who up the lofty diapason roll
Such sweet, such sad, such solemn airs divine,
Then let them down again into the soul?
Now rising love they fann'd; now pleasing dole
They breath'd, in tender musings, through the heart;
And now a graver, sacred strain they stole,
As when seraphic hands a hymn impart:
Wild warbling nature all, above the reach of art.

THOMSON.

THE storm which was hovering over the head of count Anselmo at Turin, had not as yet extended its baneful influence to the castle of Valleroy. Almeria felt a presentiment of future evil, but which, at the unexpected return of her beloved

son,

son, was for a time obliterated from her memory, every thought being then concentrated amidst her circling friends. The uncommon interest, however, that Montauban appeared to take for the welfare of the adopted daughter of her husband, occasioned her serious uneasiness; and the more so when she reflected, from several circumstances that had lately transpired in conversation with the count, the utter impossibility of his ever attaining the object of his wishes.

At an early hour in the morning, she took her usual walk round the domains of the castle; and on passing near the temple, which the night before had so much attracted her curiosity, a man, apparently wrapt in meditation, was leaning against the portico. "This, then," thought the countess Anselmo, "is its mysterious inhabitant, who has excited such alarm amongst my domestics;" and therefore determining to develop so singular a circumstance, Almeria

ria approached towards the temple; when, on accosting the supposed stranger, she recognised Montauban.—"My son!" said the astonished countess; "so soon abroad!—what can have disturbed your repose?"—"My dear mother," answered Albert, "a soldier's life, you know, is accustomed to action; repose is a word, therefore, he is but little acquainted with. In the pleasant scenery of Valleroy, and whilst inhaling the refreshing breeze from the Mediterranean, I feel my health renewed."

"Ah!" replied his mother, in deep dejection, "your looks, my son, but ill express what you would fain wish me to believe. I am sure you are ill, very ill, and require every possible attention. Come, come, my love," she continued, "return with me to the castle, and I will send again for that worthy man, Lodovico."—"He will certainly complete my cure," said Montauban, ironically. "I shall now be dispatched, like a cannon-shot, to

the

the realms above."—"Have you then no opinion of the surgical knowledge of Lodovico?"—"None—the very sight of him is an antidote to my recovery."

To this answer of Montauban the countess angrily exclaimed—"Beware, young man, of cherishing in your breast antipathies merely from unfavourable appearances—the diamond is not less valuable for being enclosed with a rough exterior—if you do, your peace of mind will be endangered by the most trivial circumstances, and you will become churlish, morose, and ungovernable." Albert was silent, thinking it most prudent not to reveal his adventure with the confessor of Santa Maria, particularly as he found Lodovico was so much in favour at the castle of Valleroy. He even regretted the expressing of that dislike to his mother; and yet more, the unwelcome manner with which he had received the monk on the preceding night,

night, on reflecting that it might, in its consequences, be fatal to the happiness of Eleanor, whose welfare was dearer to him than his own.

Montauban now followed the countess to the castle; and on entering the saloon, Albert could not conceal the disappointment he felt at the absence of Eleanor. How much did he wish then to inquire after her health, and the reason why they were deprived of her presence, had not his faltering tongue refused its office! Hope, fear, and grief, rose up at once in his soul, and with all their attendant anxieties, distracted him. Love assuredly had wrought an entire reformation in the mind of Montauban. From the gay, the wild and unthinking youth, who had, by the pleasing versatility of his mental powers, added charms to society, he was now become not only melancholy and thoughtful, but also apparently neglectful of his person; and as such, could

could not help engaging the notice of the countess, who therefore felt for her son the most poignant anguish.

Their morning repast being finished, and the servants retired, she began to question him respecting his long silence; to which Albert evasively answered, that he supposed, in the confusion of continual warfare, the letters that he had written to her had been lost, several of the couriers having been taken on their route by the enemy.

He then instantly changed the subject of discourse, by inquiring of her the period count Anselmo was expected to return to Valleroy? and on learning that it would not be for several weeks, it imparted to him much satisfaction. His mother soon after repaired to her dressing-room; and during that interval, Montauban walked in the avenue, in the hope of discovering the apartment belonging to Eleanor, and catching a glimpse of her at the windows. Disappointed,

pointed, however, in this expectation, he again bent his way towards the temple, the romantic situation of which had before so greatly interested him. Near a murmuring brook, overhung with the spreading leaves of sycamore, mulberry, and orange trees, was a rustic bench, entwined with eglantine and myrtle. This retirement accorded well with the melancholy of his soul. Albert reclined himself on the mossy couch; and on contemplating the wild and pleasing variety of the scene, one side terminating with a view of the gothic temple, which, from its tasteful architecture and deep seclusion, appeared to have been a favourite retreat for the muses, on the other side was just discernible the gloomy grandeur of the monastery of Santa Maria, and the majestic Apennines—"In that dread abode," exclaimed Montauban, "I bartered all that is dear to man on earth—a contented mind!" and continued, in extreme agi-

gitation

tation — " Oh Eleanor! did you but know the torments I suffer from the cold, unfeeling with which you treat me, surely you would pity me—would throw off the garb of apathy that surrounds your every faculty, and commiserate the distracted Albert!" The mournful aerial sounds of a harp now broke through the stillness of the morn, and terminated the soliloquy of the lover.

He listened: it was an address to the Deity, accompanied by a female voice, that enchanted his every sense. Montauban instantly arose from his seat, and directed his steps towards the temple, from whence the sounds proceeded. He again listened. In seraphic harmony the sublime strain re-echoed through the woods and extensive domains of Valleroy, summoning all Nature's work, and every earthly being to join in praises of one great, omniscient, and all-wise Providence — " Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!"

In

In mute astonishment, and rapturous admiration, Albert now hastened to the temple, fancying that the invisible musician might be his adored Eleanor, who thus delightfully sought to interrupt his mental agonies by religion's powerful triumph. On his arriving at the portico, however, the voice instantly ceased, and all was again silent. He knocked softly at the door—repeated it, but no answer was returned. He reverberated the name of Eleanor—it died away in mournful echo through the colonades of the ancient structure, and was succeeded by another, still dwelling on the name of the lovely maid. This second echo having terminated, greatly to the surprise of Montauban, who was now convinced the temple was inhabited, he therefore determined to unravel the mystery which belonged to it. He scaled one of the columns of the portico; and having nearly gained the height of one of the grated windows, which was half open, a large

written

written paper was discovered, containing the following words:—" *Profane not these holy walls—obey, stranger, or instant death will follow the rash attempt.*" The paper was then withdrawn by the unknown, and the shutter instantly closed.

If Albert was surprised at the first occurrence—the renewal of the echo, how much greater did that surprise increase on perusing the foregoing sentence, issuing so severe a prohibition to desist from further curiosity. On the impetuous character of Albert, to which was joined the most undaunted courage, it had no other effect than stimulating him to proceed in his perilous undertaking. The first thought that entered into the mind of Montauban, was a suspicion of the stranger being a favoured rival; and as jealousy is the most ungovernable of the passions, and the hardest to overcome, the young soldier was not to be thus intimidated from his design. He continued to ascend, which, from the strong

roots

roots of ivy that encircled the walls of it, was easy to accomplish. To this fearful height Albert was now endeavouring to attain; whilst resting, however, on a part of the mutilated walls of the structure, to recruit his strength for the remainder, a dreadful scream assailed his ears, and coming in the direction of the castle, he looked towards the avenue, and beheld his mother hastening towards him, supported by one of the servants. Montauban, therefore, no longer sought to execute his project of forcing himself into this mysterious habitation, but to render assistance to the countess, supposing some recent alarm at Valleroy had occasioned from her those cries of distress. Owing to his anxiety, and haste to descend from the perilous height he had attained, it was with extreme difficulty that Albert could keep himself from being precipitated into the stream beneath. He caught hold of the woodwork belonging to one of the windows, which

which, although it prevented his fall, it afforded no means for his further descent.

The agitation of his mother, who had by this time arrived at the portico of the temple, may be easier imagined than described. Ladders were brought by the servants, who, on having first distinguished their young master in this dangerous situation, had acquainted the countess, and was now hastening to the spot in hopes of relieving him. They were severally tried, but with no effect; none would reach the height of the windows. Lupino was the only one who attempted to break open the door, from the idea the rest entertained of its being the receptacle of evil spirits. That project, however, was no more successful than the former one—it resisted his utmost efforts. In an instant afterwards, however, a loud crash was heard—the framework of the window gave way, and, together with Montauban, fell to the ground with tremendous violence.

 The

The utmost confusion now prevailed, and sorrow was depicted on every countenance. In a state of insensibility, Albert was conveyed by the attendants to the castle, where for some hours he lay apparently bereft of all animation.

In the mean time, Eleanor, unconscious of being the unhappy cause of the present sufferings of the young soldier, was enjoying the comforts of an undisturbed repose. Wearied with the exertion of the preceding evening, and somewhat recovered from the alarm of her adventure at the cavern, towards morning she had fallen into a profound sleep. The usual summons, even from Lauretta, of announcing breakfast, was disregarded by Eleanor, who was therefore spared the pang intended for her, of witnessing the sad effect of her lover's jealous and impetuous disposition. The second intimation she received of the lateness of the hour, was the dinner-bell for the servants to assemble, and the hall

hall-clock striking twelve. Eleanor then rose precipitately from her couch; and having equipt herself, was hastily descending to the saloon to rejoin her friends, when she was met by Lauretta, who first acquainted her with the accident which had befallen Montauban, and the uneasiness of his mother in consequence of it—"Oh, let me hasten to console her then!" exclaimed Eleanor.—"Not yet, dear signora," she replied; "for my mistress, the countess, strictly enjoined me not to inform you of my young lord's illness, because we none of us think he will die."

Lauretta, perceiving the countenance of Eleanor change to a deathly paleness, now endeavoured to soften the latter part of her communication, by aysing—"Ah, signora, do you believe I am in earnest? Dear, dear me, why, my young lord himself told me to say so on purpose to frighten you; but you may

depend upon it, my lady, I will bring no more of his messages, as they make you so very unhappy. Oh, oh!" continued the wary girl, pretending to laugh, "what a strange, incomprehensible little fellow Love is!—how sudden and unaccountably does he metamorphose even the most sensible part of the creation (I mean, my lady, us women)! for as to the men, they are undoubtedly the most fanciful, unintelligible, headstrong, simple souls of God's earth."

A faint smile appeared on the countenance of Eleanor, at this singular description; and as she was no disciple of such doctrine, said—"I think not with you, Lauretta; so pray now do lead me to the countess Anselmo, that I may learn something more satisfactory respecting the health of my beloved Albert than what you have thought proper to acquaint me with."—"Indeed, signora," she replied, "it is the countess's express orders

ders not to be disturbed, because my lady is writing to her brother, signior Orvillé."

"I suppose by that order, then, Lauretta, I am to return to my chamber, and there wait for the further commands of the countess?"—"Yes, signora," she repeated, "that is precisely the wish of my lady, who thinks retirement the only means of composing your spirits; of which, she supposes, you must be so much in need, after the alarming occurrence you met with at the cavern last night. You may depend upon it, signora," continued Lauretta, "the sigh you heard proceeded from no living lips; no, no, dead ones, I warrant me; and the same which haunts that frightful temple, and nightly walks through the shrubbery."

"To what do you allude?" replied Eleanor, with much surprise.—"Why, signora, I say it was an apparition; and what I never heard of before—a black

one."—"Ridiculous! Go, go, Lauretta, and prepare my coffee — I'll hear no more." With this command the thoughtless, half-witted attendant was obliged to comply; and Eleanor being now relieved from the irksomeness of such conversation, again sought her chamber, where she endeavoured to calm her recent fears respecting the health of Montauban, and to take into consideration his generous proposals, so often tendered, and yet so often hitherto rejected.

To a heart like Eleanor's, so finely fraught with every noble and tender feeling, the complaints that her lover had made of her want of confidence in his honour, and of her affecting needless precaution, occasioned her serious uneasiness; and the more so, when she reflected on the many obstacles which must arise, without a peculiar interposition of Providence, to prevent so felicitous an union. The very mysterious conduct of count Anselmo, even from her

her earliest years—the severe lessons of morality, implanted on her mind during her residence in the convent by the confessor Lodovico — and her orphan state, all combined to distract, and to render, in her opinion, useless, every resolution she had at intervals formed to favour the wishes, and comply with the entreaties of her lover.

The more she reflected upon it, the more was she convinced of the many difficulties that accompanied such an undertaking. In the same indecision of mind did that day pass, and two others, without her having come to any determination proper to communicate to Montauban, as a final resolve, to which, she thought, as a woman of principle, she must hereafter adhere.

In the mean while, Albert was suffering yet greater inquietude from mental and bodily anguish. On his return to reason, the pain he before felt from his

wound was much increased since his late accident; nor did the second appearance of the monk Lodovico, who had been instantly sent for to attend him, contribute in the least to relieve it. Not all the entreaties of his mother, or the representations of the confessor, of the fatal effects which might arise from his obstinacy, could persuade Montauban to accept the proffered services of Lodovico. Albert's former antipathy had now risen to a perfect abhorrence, even at the very sight of him.

Trembling with inward rage, and again almost deprived of his senses, through his unfortunate impetuosity of disposition, Montauban caught up his sabre, which was lying unsheathed on the table, and exclaimed, whilst presenting it to the monk, "If it is my life you seek, this, this is the recipe for all disorders—plunge it deep, Lodovico, then shall I be soon at rest!"

An

An expression of terror from the countess Anselmo accompanied this wild, unpardonable action. Lodovico wrested from Montauban the dreadful implement of destruction, and throwing it with equal violence on the ground, it shivered into a thousand pieces. "Behold, rash youth!" disdainfully exclaimed Lodovico, whilst pointing to the scattered remnants of the sabre; "from this, I prophesy, you will repent your conduct to the monk Lodovico—" He was continuing: with an ironical tone, Albert, however, interrupted him, by saying—"Perhaps I may—I shall be obliged to purchase another."

"Insult upon insult!" he retorted—"I can no longer stay—yet mark my words, bold boy, nor ever expect forgiveness from the deeply-wronged Lodovico!"

The countess Anselmo now followed the monk from her son's apartment, and entreated, with tearful eyes, in the most

urgent manner, that he would pardon the ill behaviour of Albert, whose deranged intellects she was certain had alone been the cause of it.

The monk knew better; yet considering, and at the same time respecting the feelings of a mother, he appeared perfectly satisfied with her apology; and apparently to convince the countess of its reality, and allay the anxiety and grief she felt for her son's ill state of health, Lodovico wrote several prescriptions for Montauban, and having extolled the particular virtues of them, said, with much firmness, and extreme dignity of manner, "Although it will be impossible for me again to enter these domains, whilst Albert de Montauban is resident at Valleroy, yet will I most chearfully, from the great respect I owe to its possessor, at all times tender my services in her behalf." He caught hold of the hand of the countess—pressed it to his bosom, and with the utmost warmth, and peculiar tenderness

derness of feeling, exclaimed—" From my soul do I revere your exemplary virtues, as the *wife*———" Almeria involuntarily shuddered. There was a marked, an unusual energy, in the expression of that word, which forcibly struck the feelings of the countess; and as the monk observed the emotion he had occasioned, the sentence was felt unfinished, particularly as no explanation was required. Lodovico then instantly relinquished the trembling hand which he had held with such impassioned fervour, and abruptly taking his leave, departed from the castle.

In the mean while, Albert, who was by no means in such ill health as his mother's fears had represented him to be, had dismissed his attendants; and being once again at liberty to retrace in his mind the singular prohibition of the unknown inhabitant of the temple, the mingled passions of jealousy, hope, and despair, by turns affected, soothed, agi-

tated, and distressed him; and thus did Montauban commune with himself respecting the object of it—"Unfeeling, obdurate girl!" he exclaimed; "although love is a stranger to your heart, yet, from the vaunted sensibility you say you possess, it certainly, to realize that character, should have prompted you to have pitied my sufferings—to have assuaged them by candidly avowing your preference of another: such ingenuousness would have relieved my sufferings, and time and long absence would insensibly have taught me to have forgotten you." And continued—"Cruel, cruel Eleanor! If any misfortune had unhappily afflicted you, I would have defied every earthly barrier but what I would have flown to your assistance. In the battle's heat—amid the din of arms—when horror was surrounding me on every side—even in those perilous scenes I have often repeated your name with fervour; and, inspired by the remembrance of the

the blissful moments I had passed in your society, with renewed ardour have I combatted for glory. Oh Heavens!" exclaimed Montauban, in anguish, "how have all my hopes, my expectations, vanished!" A deep sigh succeeded these unpleasant ideas; and continued, "Fool that I am, to have cherished so delusive a dream, so falsely represented the balm of life, when I know, by experience, it is the misery of it. How can any one be at rest under the influence of desiring some unattained good! Impossible!" he exclaimed with vehemence. "It is that alone, then, which drives men mad, and will make me so, if I do not resolutely determine to conquer it."

Albert now paced his chamber with hurried and unequal steps, unheeding the representations of Lupino, who had now entered it, and on observing the distressed state of his mind, was earnestly requesting him to suffer the wound in his arm to be dressed, and to be more

composed.

composed. Shortly after, however, the monk's departure from the castle, Montauban received another visit from his mother. The serenity of his mind returned—he grieved to have offended so good a parent; and the manner of acknowledging it bore marks of such sincere contrition, as to silence every meditated reproach, on the part of the countess, for the late ill behaviour to the confessor of Santa Maria.

All possible care was now taken to accelerate the recovery of Montauban; for near a week his mother never left his apartment, except to pay a short visit to those of Eleanor—to inquire after her health, and to report to her the gradual amendment in that of Albert. She would likewise at times express uneasiness at not hearing from the count Anselmo, he having promised to write to her on his arrival at the castle of Oldenzo. Many a bitter tear of regret stole down the cheek of the amiable Almeria, whilst

whilst reflecting on the former comparative happiness, even in the prison of Oristagni, to what she now experienced as the wife of Anselmo. The splendour of her present situation did not compensate, in the least, for the affectionate, polite, endearing attentions she had received in the society of the late general De Montauban. A first love still held its empire in her breast. The sufferings, the wrongs, and the contumelious treatment he had undergone, during his captivity in Sardinia, called aloud for justice. Almeria knew that sooner or later the government of Piedmont would seriously cause an inquiry and search to be made for his iniquitous accusers. As the widow of so noble a character as the late general, she would have rejoiced in such a proceeding being published to the world, but now, as the wife of Anselmo, she dreaded such a disclosure. Conscience, that busy, meddling monitor, was

was ever at work to undermine and to destroy the least glimpse of repose that might sooth the already too-long harrassed spirits of the countess. Regret for the loss of her first husband, and pity for Anselmo, whose impassioned love for her had certainly been the cause of his retiring from the dignified situation he had, for so many years, most successfully occupied for his own advantage, and yet more for his country's, distressed, and indeed deeply afflicted the too-lovely Almeria, whose charms of person, and amiableness of disposition, had ever rendered her a theme of admiration with the men, and truly obnoxious to her own sex—they envied and despised her. This dislike was not diminished by Almeria's late marriage with count Anselmo, for whom many a female heart in secret sighed in vain; and the disappointment in the attaining that splendid alliance had greatly increased their hatred; the lament-

able

able effects of which will be but too fully exemplified in the following pages of this history.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

As when the winds, ascending by degrees,
First move the whitening surface of the seas;
The billows float in order to the shore;
The wave behind rolls on the wave before;
Till, with the growing storm, the deeps arise,
Foam o'er the rocks, and thunder to the skies:
So to the *fight* the thick battalions throng;
Shields urg'd on shields, and men drove men along.
Sedate and silent move the num'rous bands:
No sound, no whisper, but their chief's commands—
Those only heard; with awe the rest obey,
As if some god had snatch'd their voice away.

POPE'S HOMER.

To return, however, to Albert de Montauban, whose approach to convalescence, within these few days past, had been so promising as to induce his mother

ther to request his company the following morning to breakfast in the saloon. Albert eagerly attended the summons; and their repast being finished, various topics of conversation ensued, the more interesting to Almeria, as it principally referred to those engagements with the enemy in which Albert de Montauban had so conspicuously displayed his courage and active zeal for the noble cause in which he had embarked. One of those exploits in particular engaged the attention of the countess.

"The recollection is painful," said Albert, on his commencing it, "yet, as my mother is desirous to have that memorable action recounted to her, it becomes me to comply." At that instant the door of the saloon opened, and Eleanor, who represented the goddess of peace, attended by the Paphian queen with all her little train of loves, appeared, at once to soften, exhilarate, and shed fresh glory

on

on the heroic enterprises of the youthful warrior

A gleam of joy now animated the countenance of Montauban, as he rapturously gazed on the object of his divinity, and who, with angelic sweetness, congratulated him on his returning health. The countess, hitherto a silent spectator of this second interview of the lovers, now, however, with marked displeasure, observed to Eleanor that her flattering, and all-subduing eloquence, was extremely ill timed, and an injustice, as her son never looked so ill, or was so really indisposed, as at the present period—" Such an unfounded expression," she continued, " is therefore highly improper in you, signora, to advance, as it will only tend to render him neglectful of the means by which he might restore that health, I grieve to say, Albert has lost."

This severe retort struck like a dagger

to

to the heart of Eleanor; the smile of welcome flew from her beauteous face—a trembling tear stole down her cheek; and the look she directed to her lover, beyond the skill of the most renowned painter to attempt to portray, was expressive of her distress. On hearing this unpleasant information of his health, she would instantly have retired, had not the countess, immediately reflecting on the unreasonable warmth with which she had spoken, now requested her to remain, whilst her son continued to relate his adventures. Montauban, inwardly delighted at the softened tone in which his mother had now addressed herself to Eleanor, with trembling eagerness conducted the timid girl to the same couch on which the countess was then seated. She received her *protegée* with pleasure; and the little difference which had occurred between them was soon obliterated from their memory, in the uncommon interest they evinced at the following relation

tion of Albert, who exclaimed—" It was a victorious day for the Piedmontese; yet, as it exhibited so many scenes of woe, my soul recoils at the idea of rehearsing deeds of glory, when they are so deeply stained by acts of inhumanity. To particularize them would be impossible. Some few unfortunate subjects, however, of the surviving victims of a too-ambitious monarch, I hope I shall live to see restored to their homes, their families, and their native country.

"On the sixth of September last," continued Montauban, "after a tedious march over uncultivated and cheerless mountains, our troops approached the suburbs of Turin, headed by the duke of Savoy and the brave prince Eugene. It was at the close of evening that we halted beneath the hill of the Capuchins, and the adjacent villages, with the intention of resting there for several days to recruit the harrassed spirits of our brave men, who were almost exhausted with fatigue

and

and hunger, our supplies having previously been taken on their route by the enemy. Good accommodation in so destructive a warfare was not to be expected; yet such as it afforded, we were truly grateful for. The cheerful song and exhilarating glass went merrily round, being apparently in the most perfect security from any attack by the French, whose main army we then believed to be many leagues distant.

"For the first time during our march of fourteen days," said Albert, "I obtained a few hours of comfortable rest, having retired early from my gay companions for that purpose. About midnight I heard the drums beat to arms. In the utmost consternation I threw on my clothes, and descending into the street, I met one of our officers, who, with three soldiers, were bringing to the guard a prisoner belonging to the enemy. He was taken in the act of reconnoitring the outposts of our army, the greater part being

being encamped on the surrounding mountains; and from this man they were apprized, that with an immense force, the French general, Feuillade, intended to give us battle on the succeeding day. Not a moment was lost then in preparing to meet this unexpected attack. To my question," added Albert, "if prince Eugene was acquainted with this information of the prisoner, to whose veracity, perhaps, there might be some doubt? I received for answer, that our noble commander had been, for several hours, with his aid-de-camps, accompanied likewise by an engineer, surveying the heights, and was then inspecting and marking out the ground for the combat.

"In an instant almost after I had received this intelligence, I was mounted on my charger," said Montauban, "and anxious for the contest, rode off to the encampment, where I found all the men drawn out, and the prince, in the midst of the ranks, encouraging his troops for the

the expected battle. 'One more struggle for victory,' he exclaimed, 'will terminate our glorious campaign! Be steady at your posts, my comrades, and the day is our own.' With one voice they vociferated —'We will conquer or die!' Never did I witness such eagerness—such wild enthusiasm, to prove what they had so nobly asserted; having determined to rest on their arms during the remainder of the night, every man was in readiness for the signal of attack. On the eventful morrow, the dawn commenced with the sun rising in more than usual splendour; its genial rays warmed every soldier's bosom, and they prognosticated a successful contest. The whole of the enemy's camp was now clearly to be perceived about a league distance. The prince then ordered the whole army to move forwards, to gain a more advantageous position. The signal guns, which had been previously settled to give notice of all the columns being ready to

 advance,

advance, having been fired between three and four o'clock, the march continued; and the picquets of the advanced guard of my column," continued Albert, "were attacked in force, and obliged to give ground; but they soon rallied, and were sustained. We formed in order of battle as fast as we gained the summit of the neighbouring mountain. The enemy, however, already disheartened by the greatness of our force, not having been led to expect half the number, and not acquainted with the combination of the march, had moved in great force out of their entrenchments in the valley, with a view of turning the line upon the right. They were not successful; and therefore countermarched, in order to direct their principal effort to the left of the Italian army.

"About seven o'clock, the action began with a very vigorous attack on those troops; and almost immediately afterwards, our whole army was engaged with the

the enemy, and continued so for four hours without intermission.

"The fortune of the day was yet doubtful to us," added Montauban, "from the superiority of their artillery; and as at that time I was the only officer remaining of our brave regiment, the rest having been either killed or wounded in this desperate action, it was my fate to decide the contest."

"Oh Heavens!" interrupted the countess, in an agony of feeling; "yours, my son? Was it you that stopped the effusion of blood?"

"I am proud to say it was," replied Albert; "for at that moment the air was rent with the cry of—'Our general is taken prisoner — hasten to the assistance of the prince, or the battle's lost to us!' In vain did the officers attempt to calm the consternation of the troops; all was confusion and dismay. To stop the progress of this alarm, although I had then no doubt of its reality, with a thun-

dering voice I exclaimed—'Victory! huzza, my comrades—we are crowned with glory!' They caught the sound, and hailing the feint, with enthusiastic rapture again rallied, shouting, as they plunged with heroic ardour into the midst of the enemy's ranks—'Victory! the day is our own!' The action was restored with greater fury than ever; and on my leading the brave Piedmontese to the left of the mountain, which was to the rear of the French army, by this fortunate movement, our noble commander, who, from too great an impetuosity, had got surrounded by a party of French *chasseurs*, was now released, and soon appeared amongst his animated soldiers to close this eventful and dreadful carnage. The enemy gave ground on all sides, and left us completely masters of the field of battle. Before twelve o'clock the hostile foe were flying in all directions, leaving the ground strewed with their dead and wounded. Our own loss," added Montauban, "being so severe,

severe, we could not afford the instantaneous assistance that was requisite for our fallen enemy."

Almeria now clasped her hands, and directing her humid eyes to heaven, exclaimed—"What mother would not be proud of such a son! In you, my Albert, the glory of your father's ancestors rise anew with redoubled lustre. But go on, my boy," said the countess; "my soul, ambitious for your fame, burns to hear every particular—every exploit of your undaunted courage."

"Ah, my mother!" replied the young warrior, "seek to know no more—the remainder is replete with horror. To expatiate on the sufferings of human kind—of men torn from their kindred, every local comfort—to dwell on their piteous cries, their distracting moans for relief, where so little can be afforded to them, is most afflicting. There was, however, one circumstance, during the close of the battle, in the relation of which, my dear

madam, I think you and signora Eleanor will be interested. A French general, perceiving the fortune of the day prove adverse to his hopes, rushed from the lines, and challenged me to single combat. We fought. At the first stroke of my sabre he was wounded, yet did he renew the conflict with increased desperation. My horse was shot by one of his soldiers, who was hastening to his rescue. In my fall, I again lifted up my sabre—it pierced the side of the general, who instantly fell on the ground apparently without life.

"The retreat of the French army now becoming general, he found himself totally deserted by those to whom he had a right to look for assistance. For some minutes I gazed on his death-like countenance in silent sorrow. I knelt beside him, and supporting his head on my shoulder, I could perceive he breathed. A heavy sigh succeeded, and he then faintly exclaimed—'Do not disturb me—

me—pray let me die in peace!' I endeavoured to console the officer," continued Montauban, "expressing a hope that the wound was not mortal, and by saying he that should be directly conveyed with great care to my tent, where I would instantly send for a surgeon to attend on him.

'Oh, no!' he replied; 'I wish not for life with the loss of honour.' By this time, however, we were joined by several of our soldiers, and, in compliance with my earnest entreaty, the general suffered us to bear him from the field; which office having performed as gently as possible, holding my handkerchief to the wound to prevent its bleeding afresh, he was conducted to my tent, where I found one of the surgeons in attendance (owing to the report," added Montauban, "that it was myself who had received a fatal stroke from my adversary). I had soon the pleasure of hearing the wound was not deep; and that, with great at-

tention, the general might be restored to health."

Albert paused at this part of the narration. He perceived the countenance of Eleanor changed to a deathly paleness, whilst, with her hand, she endeavoured to chase away the tears which had involuntarily flowed during Montauban's recital of this adventure. The countess, feeling less agitation than her *protegée*, and anxious to hear the conclusion, not observing the effect it had produced on Eleanor, requested her son to resume his narrative.

"The detail of such warlike scenes," replied Albert, addressing his mother, "is too melancholy for the gentle soul of your young friend;" and then turning to the weeping girl, said, with much emotion, thrown entirely off his guard by her apparent grief—"I beseech your pardon—I would not for the world offend you;" and then continued—"Vain, thoughtless

thoughtless Montauban! in extolling your own supposed merit, your words have pierced to the heart an angel!"

These wild sentences of the lover increased the anguish they were meant to subdue. "Oh Eleanor!" he exclaimed, throwing himself at her feet, "no suppliant ever deserved your pity more than Albert de Montauban does at this moment."—"Why will you talk thus?" replied Eleanor, in the greatest agitation. "Your speech alarms me. The sudden close of your narrative assures me the remainder is of dreadful import. My fears have realized the conclusion; and I foretell unceasing anguish will be my portion. Know you not," she continued, that count Anselmo, who took me, a helpless infant, to his care, has affirmed that France is my native land? and although my noble lord has ever cherished me as his daughter (at that word Montauban started), yet has he bade me to revere the place which gave me birth.

Judge, then, if I can hear, unmoved, the miseries of those whom I have been ever taught to hold in reverence? No—it is impossible!" she continued. "With my latest breath I will bless them, and invoke every guardian saint for their felicity."

This severe, but exalted reproof of Eleanor, rendered all further expostulation unavailing. The latter part of the narrative, in particular, had afflicted her; a sudden presentiment having rushed across her mind that the unfortunate French general, whom Montauban had wounded and taken prisoner, might be her own father. From the commencement of her reply to Albert's entreaty, he was certain she entertained that idea, and therefore deeply lamented he should have been so unguarded as to have related it.

Displeasure, however, did not long remain an inmate in the breast of Eleanor. She soon reflected that Montauban had but performed his duty, and in the exercise

exercise of that sacred trust, had acted with humanity and great benevolence. Still there was an indefinable sensation of fear, which, notwithstanding the wish she had to hear the sequel of Albert's narrative, this inward dread seemed to forcibly prevent her having it gratified. Eleanor, therefore, requested permission of the countess to retire; and as she arose from her seat, perceiving the melancholy looks of Montauban, with much gentleness said—"Your country is your debtor, signior; nor must you think the glorious enterprise of relieving Turin, in which you so greatly distinguished yourself, can ever be erased from their remembrance. I have no doubt that many a fair one," she continued, smiling through her tears, "are now employed in weaving the laurel, and other ensignia of honour, to decorate the brow of their preserver." The lover felt not this compliment from his mistress—the manner in which it was spoken offended.

Albert fancied the real meaning intended to be conveyed by it was, that his glory was only to arise from the havock she supposed him to have made, and his triumph from the pleasure of insulting the distresses of a fallen enemy.

How ingenious is the subtle god of love in tormenting his votaries! Immediately, therefore, on Eleanor's leaving the saloon, Montauban intimated to his mother that he should depart from Valleroy the succeeding day, and proceed to Suza, where his regiment was then stationed. The countess, who had now received sufficient proofs of her son's attachment for Eleanor, in a very firm and dignified manner, demanded to know his future intention in respect to her *protegée?* at the same time attempting to convince him, that whatever plans he had perhaps formed for the completion of his wishes, they would be surely frustrated by count Anselmo — that her birth was mysterious, if not dishonourable.

able—"Say not so," hastily interrupted Montauban; "for on her very countenance is marked the stamp of honour. Your suspicions, dearest mother," he continued, "rend my heart in twain. Oh Heavens! can you, for a moment, cherish an idea of Eleanor being the daughter of count Anselmo, when you have just heard from the lips of the lovely girl the declaration of Anselmo, for her to consider France as her native country? Should even this asseveration be false, do you suppose that the count would have introduced to your notice and regard the offspring of an illicit attachment? Impossible!" continued Montauban, with an elevated tone of voice, on perceiving the attention his mother was listening to these arguments in her favour. "Oh, then, let me beseech you to dispel these injurious and tormenting doubts, and be my advocate for pardon to the gentle Eleanor, whose displeasure I have so unhappily incurred!"

The

The countess, although not convinced of the validity of her son's reasoning, on a topic in which she knew his heart was so nearly concerned, yet with more calmness, and less assumed authority, she now requested Albert to relate to her the commencement of his acquaintance with the *protegée* of Anselmo. This command was instantly complied with, and with much ingenuousness, except that part referring to the monk Lodovico, to which he thought proper not to allude. On Albert's then renewing his entreaty for his mother's acquiescence with the proposals of marriage he intended to make to Eleanor, she strongly urged the necessity of delaying his suit till the return of the count into Tuscany, Anselmo having alone the power of disposing of the affections of the foundling; and continued—" I shall then feel most happy, my dear Albert, should I obtain that consent, to promote, if possible, your

expectant

expectant felicity with the gentle Eleanor."

"The consent of Anselmo, madam," replied Montauban, mournfully, "I despair of."—"To his will, however, you are, and must be impelled to abide by; for believe me, that Eleanor, (whose love for you I suppose sincere,) even she would not assent to listen to such a declaration, if the permission of her benefactor was not first obtained, whom she holds in reverential awe. Let us not, my son," said Almeria, "anticipate an evil that may not befall us; rather let us cheer the sad heart with this consolatory reflection, that there is no misfortune permitted to happen but some good may be extracted out of it. Oh, Albert, my only surviving comfort! endeavour, then, to expel this destructive melancholy from your breast—rise superior to such a womanish weakness; to effect which, great as my happiness is in beholding, and knowing that you are in safety, yet do I now conjure

conjure you to fly from Valleroy, nor attempt to return until you are assured of my lord's permission. The future peace of a lovely girl depends on it; and——"

—"Say no more, madam, I entreat you," hastily interrupted Montauban; "I am prepared, this moment, to obey your mandate." To this ready compliance of departing from Tuscany, however, the countess did not assent, on reflecting that in his then ill state of health, so soon to renew his journey might be more dangerous than allowing him to sustain, for a period, the society of the fascinating Eleanor. We may justly say, in the words of the poet, Where love reigns, that nought remains; but so

"Redime te captum quam queas minimo."

## CHAP. VI.

It is jealousy's peculiar nature
To swell small things to great; nay, out of nought
To conjure much, and then to lose its reason
Amid the hideous phantoms it has form'd.

YOUNG.

WEARILY passed with Albert the first and second week of his abode at Valleroy; his mother was thoughtful, and at times apparently unhappy; and Eleanor, from pleading a slight indisposition, except at the hours of repast, had secluded herself entirely in her own apartments.

Towards the close of the evening before his intended departure, having now been nearly three weeks at the castle, the countess requested Montauban to accompany

pany her to the convent of Santa Maria, having, as she said, some business of consequence to relate to the superior, which must be delivered in person. During their walk, being unattended by any of the servants, Almeria renewed her inquiry respecting the officer whom Albert had wounded at the close of the battle in relieving Turin, for the fate of whom Eleanor had evinced so much uneasiness and inquietude.

"He was our prisoner," said Albert; "but through the clemency of our royal commander, the general was permitted to return to France on his parole."—"His name?"—"Clairvillé," replied Albert to this question of his mother; who continued to inquire if he had any reason to suppose that the general was a relative of Eleanor? With a desponding tone of voice he answered—"I am afraid time will prove it so."

"Afraid!—rather rejoice, my son," reiterated his indulgent mother, "that

your

your supposition may prove true; for then under a kinder star would your fortunes flourish—the lovely Eleanor, perhaps, receive a parent's blessing—the unconquerable doubts, which I entertain of her near affinity to count Anselmo dissipated—and my son be again owned as the rightful heir of Valleroy. Do not interrupt the pleasing ideas I cherish of futurity," said his mother, on perceiving him going to speak. "I am already acquainted with the count's displeasure towards you, Albert, and grieve for the cause of it. The unfortunate difference between you, however, I despair not of being reconciled. He wants not generosity, when convinced that it will be well bestowed. Anselmo, in his relation of the history of the foundling, informed me, that the paper which was tied around her neck, inserting a forcible appeal for the infant's protection, was written in the French language: should it, therefore, be really proved that the general

of

of whom you have spoken is related to the amiable girl, the humanity you have shewn to your prisoner will be amply rewarded."

"Oh, mother, cease to distress me by such a belief!" he replied. "Can you for an instant suppose, that, should the unfortunate officer, which Heaven avert! be the father of Eleanor, she would unite herself to the wretch who had lifted up his hand against that parent's life?"—"Self-defence is justifiable," answered the countess; "in war it becomes a paramount duty—to shrink from it marks the coward. If we act right, Albert, we must hope always. In your conversation with the general," continued the countess, "had you no opportunity of introducing the name of Anselmo's *protegée?*"—"The mind of Clairvillé was too ill at ease to admit of his discoursing on any subject," replied Albert, "except expressing an anxious desire to be permitted to retire into France. At times he

was

was quite delirious: in those unhappy moments, however, I learnt sufficient to convince me, that if the general be not related to the lovely Eleanor, he is allied to the monk Lodovico."

"A relation of our confessor!" exclaimed Almeria, with the utmost surprise; and continued—"Did Clairvillé reveal so much? He must then be an Italian?"—"I cannot think so—I have too honourable an opinion of him to suppose that he would desert his colours in so unjust a cause," said Montauban; "neither did his sentences accord with that idea you entertain, having denounced, in those dreadful paroxysms, an eternal vengeance on the very name of one. In the utmost fury he exclaimed—'My sword shall never rest till the wrongs of Hyppolitus are revenged!' An awful silence for a few moments then succeeded, during which Clairvillé became more composed. I approached him—he knew me not; the general incoherently uttered—

'Hold!

'Hold! no more! already I feel your dagger at my heart—destruction follows the rash attempt;' and then, in a milder tone of supplication, he continued—'Oh my brother! again let us be united in everlasting bonds of amity—accede to my entreaty.' A long pause now ensued," said Albert, "which was broken only by the deep moans of the afflicted officer, who, to his bodily pain, was likewise apparently suffering the greater misery of mental agony. Some time having elapsed in this silent sorrow, he concluded by pronouncing, with marked emphasis and poignant grief, the name of Eleanor and Lodovico."

"Strange! very strange indeed!" replied the countess to this latter information of Montauban's; "and impossible for either of us to unravel so mysterious a conclusion!" So deeply were they engaged in this interesting subject, that they had now arrived at the gates of the monastery, without either being in the least

least conscious of the termination of their walk. The tolling, however, of the convent bell for vespers, recalled Albert to his recollection; with a heavy sigh he mentally ejaculated, "It was at this very hour that I first saw the beauteous Eleanor—first knew the pangs of love—became wounded with the shafts so bright; I sunk insensibly its devoted victim."

Prayers having begun at the convent, the countess could not obtain an interview with the abbess that night—"How unfortunate!" exclaimed Almeria; "you should have reminded me, Montauban, of the lapse of time: indeed you are a sorry companion; I will not request your attendance again if you are so thoughtless." Albert smiled at this reproof of his mother, but was silent; the delay having arisen from her curiosity in hearing the account of general de Clairvillé, which her son would have been better pleased to have remained concealed.

The

The countess having now left a message with the portress, that she should wait again on the superior the succeeding morning, she returned with her son to Valleroy; and on entering the saloon, complaining of being fatigued with her walk, instantly retired to her own apartment.

On being left alone, the pleasant moonlight induced Albert to renew his walk through the domains of the castle. He wandered about for several hours, and enjoyed an indescribable pleasure in being permitted to sigh at liberty, and indulge reflection on the past—the uncertainty of the future; to trace, in thought, the happy scenes of childhood—the misery of man on arriving at maturity, when too oft unbounded passions take the lead, and reason, light of the soul, is contemned and disregarded. This melancholy cast of thought, however, was not without its use; it calmed, for a while, the spirits of the impetuous youth:

youth; the natural dignity of his mind became, in some degree, restored; and on determining to uphold it, he solemnly swore to fly from the enchantment which had so fatally inthralled him; and prayed that in active life he might so pass his days as to quite forget the world had ever contained an Eleanor. Such a resolution was truly magnanimous, and bespoke the hero.

The scene around conspired, too, in assisting this present state of his mind; the frowning grandeur of the lofty turrets of the castle, which seemed, as borne by the gale of evening, to whisper, "These mutilated walls have often signalized themselves with glory; here, on these battlements, has many a warrior hurled destruction on a besieging foe, and taught to thousands what the human mind is capable, possessed of heroic virtue, unshackled by female chains."

Montauban appeared to tread on air, his soul uplifted by the solemnity of the

hour. Night having now spread her shadowing mantle o'er the heavens, the pale moon, shedding a soft and silvery radiance, alone assisted to guide the wanderer through this sweet Arcadia, whose crystal currents, and enamelled banks of roses, with other odoriferous flowers, flung their fragrant perfumes along the gentle breeze, and aided to throw an enchantment over every surrounding object.

His bosom glowed with gratitude as he contemplated the wondrous beauty of Divine Providence; and as the melancholy idea rose in his mind, that here he should never more behold them, he exclaimed aloud—"Farewell, ye blissful scenes—farewell to Valleroy!" and continued, in softer accents of sorrow at the reflection, "Oh Eleanor, little did Montauban think, when he first loved you, you would have taught his heart to feel such pangs!"

An illusive ray of light now terminated the

the sad complaints of the lover. In passing along the grove, on the eastern side of the castle, Albert saw the form of Eleanor gliding through the trees which fronted the temple: swift as lightning he pursued the sylph-like enchantress; and on drawing nearer, he observed a letter in her hand; she was pressing it with eagerness to her bosom, whilst reciting in a low tone of voice, as she continued her way to the castle, the following lines to friendship:

"In questa mia solitudino, dove sola prova paie 'l mio cor. Io rammento? Contento passato ed i dolci paiceri dell amicisia. Quest alma reconoscenti godera sempre della felicitá dell' amico, penera per le sua sciaguro porgendo, sempre vote per la sua salute, ed ogni prosperita. Ahime! guardo splendera di nuova quest' astro benigna, sovra i giorni miu."

A deadly faintness now benumbed every faculty of Montauban. Eleanor, with the utmost transport, kissed the letter from which she had been repeating,

and then folding it up with great care, and concealing it beneath her robe, again uttered aloud—"*Felice notte, mia caro amico !*"

Jealousy had now taken full possession in the breast of Montauban, accompanied with a determination of revenging the supposed inconstancy of Eleanor, although it was but an instant before he had so nobly resolved to drive her from his remembrance, and regain his liberty. In furious haste, therefore, he passed her, and no longer able to command the natural warmth of his temper, exclaimed to himself, "Distraction ! I cannot endure such accumulated insults!" and continued, with greater vehemence —"My brain's on fire ! yet shall my sufferings be participated !"

If the first exclamation did not alarm the gentle Eleanor, the latter sentence of Albert prevented her from all power of reply. Terrified also at his menacing gesture, as he darted along the avenue

to

to regain the castle, she could not immediately recover presence of mind, nor courage sufficient, to encounter any explanation with the impetuous Montauban. Surprised and affected at such behaviour, (well knowing that his angry declamation alluded to her,) as soon as she thought she saw Albert enter the castle, Eleanor again bent her way towards the temple; and on seating herself under the portico, she again took the fated letter from her bosom which had so inflamed the imagination of her lover, and pressing it to her lips, burst into a flood of tears.

In the mean while, Montauban was a silent spectator of this second interesting, yet to him, agonizing scene, he not having entered the castle, as she supposed, but on observing her intention, had returned, and followed her unperceived to the temple. In an agony of desperation he now appeared before her, and instantly snatching the letter from

her hand, he tore it to atoms; and exclaimed—"Thus, madam, would I serve the author of it; and know that Albert de Montauban will not rest till he has had ample vengeance on the villain who has so basely annihilated all his future hopes of happiness."

Eleanor heard not, however, the conclusion of this dreadful imprecation; her feelings were so overcome by this violent proceeding of Albert, that she fell senseless at his feet. At that moment a groan proceeded from the interior of the temple, followed by another yet more appalling to the ear of Montauban, whose passion had now become somewhat calmer, on observing the effects of his impetuosity. Tremblingly he raised the fainting Eleanor from the ground—he supported her in his arms—but could not speak. This third convincing proof of an affection for the writer of the letter he had destroyed, made him look on her with marked dislike. In silent indifference,

ference, and even impatience to be released from his burthen, Albert then awaited her return to reason.

A short interval had elapsed of this unpleasant rencounter of the lovers, when the sound of voices not far off, and evidently approaching towards them, recalled the bewildered senses of the lovely orphan, who now shrunk with terror from her unkind supporter, and leaning against an adjoining column, it appeared to Montauban that she was desirous of being left alone; he therefore said—"I am well convinced, madam, my presence is disagreeable to you; I can however assure you this is the last time—" Before he could finish the severe sentence of taking leave of her for ever, and denounce further vengeance on his supposed rival, Ernestine Rodolphus, the countess, attended by Lauretta, made her appearance.

Montauban, having no satisfactory reasons for being seen with Eleanor at such an hour of the evening, and so distant

from the castle, bowed, therefore, respectfully to his mother; and without speaking a word, instantly disappeared amidst the windings of an adjacent shrubbery.

Displeased at such behaviour, the countess now advanced to the amiable girl, and taking her trembling hand, requested from her an explanation of this singular meeting, when she supposed that she had retired to rest for several hours. Poor Eleanor could not utter a single sentence; her audible sighs, and face covered with tears, was all the information she could derive that something was wrong; some unhappiness, which appeared to prey with great anguish upon her heart, and prevented the power of reply.

"Well, my love," said the humane Almeria, unwilling to probe the wound she could not heal, "return with me to the castle, and endeavour, by sleep, only friend of the miserable, to chase away the sorrow which oppresses you. I am not

not altogether ignorant of the cause of it," continued the countess, "therefore if you act ingenuously with me, and in your actions are but guided by reason, depend on it, you shall ever find in me an affectionate and faithful adviser." These tender assurances of friendship affected Eleanor more deeply than the reproaches she had listened to from the proud and impetuous Albert, who had, in one moment of anger, as she supposed, torn her from his heart for ever. Silently, therefore, as she followed her benefactress to the castle, she mentally ejaculated—"Oh Montauban! did you but inherit one spark of your mother's virtue, I should not, as now, have to lament my easy credulity!" A sudden project then pressed on her imagination, and forgetful of her friend being so near, she exclaimed aloud—"I am resolved, and no power on earth shall prevent the execution of it!"

"Are your resolutions so firm, Elea-

nor?" inquired the countess, smiling at the warmth with which she had expressed herself. "Ah, my dear girl," she continued, "when you have seen as much of the world as I have done, and have been more experienced in its unavoidable calamities, the present disappointment, and the unpleasantries you may hitherto casually have suffered, will appear light in comparison to those of your maturer years; those lines of the immortal Homer, in his Iliad, where he says—

'To labour is the lot of man below,
And when Jove gave us life, he gave us woe,'

has been fully illustrated by the history of succeeding ages; the traditions which have been handed down to posterity of the greatest and best of men having suffered the most oppressive cruelty; yet did they bear their misfortunes with patience and moderation; secure in the approbation of their own hearts, they bid

defiance

defiance to all of human kind, and died as they lived—full of piety, nobly great, an everlasting honour to themselves and their country."

This kind of consolation, the deriving comfort to ourselves from the knowledge of the greater sufferings of others, had ever failed, however, on the commiserating disposition of Eleanor; she had oftener wept more for the sorrows of others than her own; which, as the countess justly observed, had as yet, however, been trifling, in comparison to what she would most probably endure on a further acquaintance with the world, in which, for some unknown cause, the most deserving characters are not always those on whom the sunshine of fortune is destined to visit.

They having now entered the hall of the castle, Lauretta terminated the eloquence of her mistress by rapturously crying out with joy, "Thanks to the Holy Virgin, we are all safe at home again!

The very thought of that horrid temple so terrifies me, that I do humbly pray, my lady, you will never take me any more spirit-hunting; for——" A look of displeasure from the countess now silenced her loquacious attendant; and on observing Lupino, who was at a distant part of the hall, busily employed in packing up his master's trunk, Almeria sent her to inquire the reason of this hasty preparation for her son's departure? Lupino informed them it was his master's intention to leave Valleroy at a very early hour in the morning. "Where is your master?" inquired the countess, on hearing this sudden determination of Montauban. To the reply of Lupino that he was retired to rest, she continued—" Then inform him that we cannot dispense with his company until after to-morrow. It is my Albert's birthday, Lupino; and I propose to commemorate it by giving a little fête to the neighbouring peasantry; therefore he must stay to witness their festivity."

festivity." This information afforded much pleasure to Lupino and Lauretta; the latter instantly departed to reveal this welcome intelligence to the rest of the servants, and Lupino to acquaint his master. Eleanor and the countess waited in the saloon for an answer to the message. Almeria, however, observing the pallid looks of her young friend, and her extreme agitation, rang for lights, and dismissed her by saying—"Come, come, my love, retire to repose; for I must have all your charms summoned up to-morrow to grace the rural banquet of the villagers, by whom you know you are held in great veneration."

The dejected Eleanor, attended by Lauretta, then repaired to her own chamber, the latter not a little exhilirated at the thoughts of having escaped the meditated midnight ramble with her mistress, whose intention it was that night to have explored the mystery of the temple,

temple, and developed, at once, the cause which had inspired such terror amongst the domestics.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

"The world has now no joys for me,
Nor can life now one pleasure boast,
Since all my eyes desir'd to see—
My wish, my hope, my all, is lost.
————Ye Powers divine,
What have I done, or thought, or said?
Oh say, what horrid act of mine,
Has drawn this vengeance on my head?"

"If night, as we are taught to believe, brings peace to the weary inhabitant of a cottage, how much more is their state to be envied than mine!" ejaculated Eleanor, as she vainly sought in sleep to obliterate, for a time, the unhappiness which oppressed her. Lauretta, observing the anguish

anguish of Eleanor, endeavoured to divert and recall her mind from the object which had renewed, with such increasing gloom, the melancholy tenor of her natural disposition, by a continued relation of Antonio, whose history Lauretta had been prevented concluding on a former night.

"I think, my lady," said this artless girl, as she seated herself by the couch of Eleanor, "I left off my brother's history just at that part where he fell in love with Corisande, the merchant's daughter. It is a grievous tale, and has been a warning to every body—I mean, all my fellow-servants that I have informed of it—how to escape so unaccountable a malady. The doctor used to say, when he attended Antonio, that it was learning began to turn his wits, and love made him downright mad. My brother sometimes fancied himself transported, as he used to say, into the Torrid Zone, and would call upon the Tropical

pical Cancer to allay the flame which, he said, was consuming his vitals. At other times," continued Lauretta, "he would sob, and sigh, and pine himself to death; then again would Antonio start up from his seat, and cry aloud for Corisande; and on being quite worked up to frenzy at the mention of her name, he would exclaim, with fury—'Self-destruction is alone the remedy!' which used to frighten us all most terribly, my lady."

"Poor young man!" ejaculated the still-weeping Eleanor; and continued—"Was your brother at home then, Lauretta?"—"Oh yes, my lady; because on the marriage of the merchant's daughter with the rich banker at Paris, Antonio was so outrageous, that his master was obliged to send him away as quick as possible. Well, then, my lady," continued the talkative girl, "as I was saying before, my poor brother would determine on killing himself downright; and once, to complete, as he thought, his sacrilegious intention,

intention, Antonio mounted an old wooden chair, exclaiming, 'Oh Sappho! immortal fair! thy destiny be mine!' when immediately he jumped down, and laid on the ground as if he was quite dead. My mother was then sadly alarmed, and cried bitterly over him for some time; fortunately, however, the doctor came to visit him, and the moment Antonio heard his voice, (which was not one of the pleasantest in the world, that I must say,) he got up again, and began to sing the following little English ballad, applying it to his own situation, and which Antonio has since taught me to repeat in that tongue —Shall I give you the words of it, my lady?"

Eleanor having some slight knowledge of the language, an assent was given to this request, and Lauretta thus began—

"Distracted with care,
For Corisande the fair,
Poor Antonio, her lover,
Resolves, in despair,

No

No longer to languish,
Nor bear so much anguish;
But mad with his love,
To a precipice goes,
Where a leap from above
Would soon finish his woes.

When in rage he came there,
Beholding how steep
The sides did appear,
And the bottom how deep,
His torments projecting,
And sadly reflecting,
That a lover forsaken
A new lover may get,
But a neck, when once broken,
Can never be set:

And that he could die
Whenever he would;
But that he could live
But as long as he could:
How grievous soever
The torment might grow,
He scorn'd to endeavour
To finish it so;

But

But bold, unconcern'd,
At thoughts of the pain,
He calmly return'd
To his cottage again."

A faint smile appeared on the countenance of Eleanor at this ludicrous description of the tender passion of love, so humourously related by her attendant, yet being at the same time weary of it, she said—"Indeed, Lauretta, I must request you to hasten to the conclusion of your story, for sleep weighs heavy on my eyelids, and oppresses my senses; therefore be quick, as I wish to indulge it."

"Well, then, my lady," she replied, "soon after that, my brother got well again; and being tired of home, he returned to Paris, and entered into the service of a gentleman, who employed him to write speeches and panegyrics on the great lords of the state, who had not inclination or abilities to do it for themselves. Antonio, however, was very shortly

shortly weary of that occupation, which, however profitable, did not acquire him any fame: so therefore, as he used to say, he turned a living author instead of a dead one, having his name inscribed in large capitals on the front of every title-page; and a fine piece of work he made of it: he wrote for booksellers, who, to be sure, were obliging enough to print his works, but too polite to pay for them. Fame was his reward; and Antonio found, to his sorrow, that an empty pocket was the consequence of it. To repair that he was then advised to libel the great folks — foolish fellow! not to know that that was like a mole-hill in contest with a mountain, which is sure to fall to the ground. He got, however, a maintenance by it, for they instantly put him in prison, from which they will take good care he never gets out, I dare say."

Thus ended Lauretta's account of her unfortunate

unfortunate brother, who, had he possessed less of talent, and a greater share of prudence, might have been an honour to himself, and have rendered efficient services to the declining years of his aged parents; instead of which, through a false idea of ambition, and want of foresight, he had, perhaps, to end his days within the gloomy walls of a prison.

To a question of Lauretta to her mistress, whether she did not think it a very sorrowful story? Eleanor returned for answer — "Sorrowful indeed! for Heaven knows I yet dearly love him!" Lauretta, not understanding exactly what she meant by such an apostrophe, repeated her question. To this, however, her mistress was silent; and on Lauretta's going nearer to the couch of Eleanor, she found her in a sound sleep, which accounted for the incoherent manner she had replied to her respecting the fate of Antonio. Lauretta, therefore, having

ing no longer an attentive hearer to her loquacity, she carefully closed the curtains, and then softly left the apartment.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

The busy husbandman has turn'd the soil
With his bent ploughshare: hence his annual toil;
His country, children, profit by his pains;
Hence he his herds and useful steers maintains.
No pause he knows; or teems the bounteous year
With fruits, or cattle, or the bearded ear;
The plenteous produce loads the furrow'd land;
The granaries burst; cold winter is at hand;
The pounding press now Sicyon's berries feel;
Glad to their sties the swine, full-acorn'd, reel.
The woods give arbutes; autumn-fruits abound,
And mild grapes ripen on high sunny ground.
Their father's neck the fondling train embrace;
And Virtue's self protects the blameless race.

VIRGIL.

THE following morning was the anniversary of the birth of Albert de Montauban.

ban. The countess Anselmo having, on the preceding day, signified her intention of giving a little fête to the villagers contiguous to the domains of Valleroy, at the approach of dawn, therefore, a cheerful and even joyous scene presented itself. It was the close of the vintage, and on that day the hardy peasantry had finished their annual labour. They assembled early, and with their pipe and tabor hailed their yet drowsy inhabitants of the castle with their lively strains, and as a particular mark of respect, likewise, for the gallant soldier. A resplendent and all-cheering sun now broke through the long casements of painted glass, which illuminated the chamber of Albert; he awoke from his disturbed sleep, unrefreshed by it, and unhappy. Respect for his mother, however unwillingly, had detained him for this day at the castle. He arose, and having dressed himself with more than ordinary care in the habiliments of his profession, he determined, as he should so

soon leave Valleroy, once more to revisit the mysterious temple. As he proceeded towards it, and on passing under the windows of the apartment of Eleanor, he involuntarily stopped; a low and mournful tone of voice was distinctly heard to come from thence, accompanied by a lute; he listened, and presently heard that Eleanor was the syren; and that she was repeating the words of a stanza of which he was the author. Some degree of satisfaction was communicated to the mind of Albert by this seeming preference given to his composition, which, however trifling it might be, and uninteresting, perhaps, to an impartial judge, was yet held in high estimation, and before all others preferred in the opinion of our lovely orphan; for though harsh and ungracious had been Albert's treatment towards Eleanor, still she could not for one instant chase him from her remembrance—it whispered to her she was once blest with his regard.

The

The agonizing thought that she now was parted from him for ever struck her so forcibly, that tears continually interrupted her from proceeding with the melancholy strain. Montauban heard her deep-drawn sighs—her stifled sobs; but jealousy raged in his breast with such obduracy, that it completely stifled every sentiment of pity for the unhappy object.

Proceeding on his way to the temple, he once looked back at the castle, and to the apartment of Eleanor; but on perceiving her standing near the window, he fled with as much precipitation as if he had seen a basilisk.

"Tormenting love! thou bane of every joy,
Whose pains or sweets alike our peace destroy;
Still equal woes from thee mankind endure,
Fatal thy wound, and fatal is thy cure."

On arriving at the temple, Montauban observed with surprise that the part of the wall which had given way, on his in-

specting the edifice, was now rebuilding; and perceiving the workmen busily employed in the undertaking, he inquired by whose orders it was? They replied "The confessor Lodovico;" which fully confirmed the suspicions he before entertained. Defeated in his purpose, therefore, Albert returned to the castle; and on entering the saloon, he received a congratuatlory compliment (having now entered his twenty-first year,) from his mother and Eleanor, who were already seated at the breakfast-table. The charms of the latter never appeared to more advantage; her garb was simple, but becoming; the small wreaths of flowers which decorated her head, and were tastefully arranged around the dress, were perfectly Arcadian, and suited to the occasion; the air of softened melancholy which was diffused over her countenance gave an additional and finishing grace to the whole form; and had not the mind of Montauban been so unfor-

tunately

tunately prejudiced against her, such a combination of loveliness must have greatly operated in her favour. During the repast, neither Albert or Eleanor exchanged a single sentence.—The pride of both these young people were deeply wounded. With that impression on their minds, therefore, which were too keenly sensible for their peace, in such a world as this, where the principle of "to bear and forbear" is so strongly requisite to attain even a moderate share of happiness, no reconciliation was likely to be effected, under the present delusion which mutually actuated their conduct.

The countess, perceiving their mutual embarrassment, proposed a walk; and as Montauban acquiesced in it, she desired Eleanor to put on her veil and to accompany them. However desirous the lovely girl might be of retiring from the society of the youth, whose behaviour

towards her had been so ungentle, indeed we may say severe, still it could not prevent that uniform propriety of behaviour which was inherent in her—she accepted the offer.

On the lawn were now assembled various groups of the peasantry, to partake of the bounty so generously awarded them by the fair hostess of the castle of Valleroy. Round the tables, which were sheltered from the meridian heat by an overhanging grove of citron, and were plentifully supplied with viands and the most delicious fruits, sat many a joyous face, in radiant colours of fancy recounting their exploits—their deeds of arms—or the more beneficial effects of industry: whilst among the younger part of the community, their favourite village maid, the beauteous Florisee, queen of their little festival, and whose services we have before had occasion to mention in this history, was busily employed in distributing chaplets of flowers among the

the young men and maidens, who were to join with her in the festive dance. The minstrels, with lively strains, now struck up, to arrange in order these votaries of Terpsichore. The air was in an instant filled with harmony; and mirth, with innocence, revelled in the domains of Valleroy.

The countess Anselmo, Albert, and Eleanor, on approaching the sylvan scene of their gaiety, were severally complimented on the happy occasion. They were then led to a rustic alcove at the extremity of the lawn, entwined with eglantine and myrtle, and canopied with ripened clusters of grapes, and the tender ringlets of the vine; whilst choicest flowers and shrubs wafted ambrosial fragrance to all around. On their being seated, Florisee, attended by a young shepherd, approached the countess, and kneeling, presented to her a wreath of laurel, with the following lines in honour of Albert de Montauban :—

"These antique tow'rs*, in massy state,
In our young champion's mind shall raise
Vast images of Italia's elder days.
Albert, the bold pattern of his patriot sire,
Shall fill with early fame's immortal fire.
————Yet, oh warrior youth!
May no dazzling ray
Of specious fame thy stedfast feet betray!
Be thine domestic glory's radiant calm!
Be thine the sceptre wreath'd with many a palm!
Be thine the throne with peaceful emblems hung!
The silver lyre to milder conquest strung."

This little tribute of respect was gratefully received by the countess, who, on having read it, with a significant smile presented it to her son. Montauban instantly recognized, that, although much disguised, the handwriting was Eleanor's; yet her conduct had been so mysterious of late, and her behaviour so distant towards him, that this circumstance created not the least pleasure. For the first time, however, since their unfortunate ren-

* Valleroy.

counter

counter at the temple, he now addressed her by saying—"You, madam, will feel no satisfaction in perusing this complimentary effusion, when the object is not deserving of it; and I have no doubt you will think with me, that it should be consigned for ever to oblivion." Eleanor was provokingly silent; Albert therefore tore it in pieces, and then turning to the astonished and disappointed Florisee, said haughtily—"You must be more circumspect for the future, and not praise any one except your lover—it will make him jealous."—"Ah, my lord, but indeed you are mistaken," replied the artless girl; "for true love is never jealous—at least so my lady Eleanor told me, and I would take her opinion before all the world." After which she immediately tripped away to join the dancers. However this conversation might have been amusing to Montauban, it was exceedingly distressing to Eleanor, who, although her face was covered with a

veil, the traces of tears were visibly to be seen; and on the countess's perceiving how really unpleasant to Eleanor was the irony of her lover, she said to him—"Come, my son, this is but sorry pastime for my young charge; I request, therefore, you will lead her out to dance: such condescension of you both will gratify our numerous visitants, and likewise help to enliven the drooping spirits of my lovely girl." Albert bowed acquiescence to this proposal, and then muttered a few high-flown compliments to Eleanor, of the honour she would afford him by her assent to his mother's proposition. In the true spirit of coquetry, Eleanor now had a favourable opportunity of returning his own thoughts on that subject—"Flattery, my lord, is displeasing at all times, more particularly so when it proceeds from those whose unfavourable opinion is but too well known to the object of it. The honour you propose to me I must beg leave to decline,

it

it not being an amusement I am partial to; and should I alter my present determination, I am already engaged."

The countess could not but express her surprise at the spirit with which Eleanor had answered her son, and yet more at the mysterious conclusion. She felt much displeasure on account of it; and to conceal it, rose from her seat, and walked towards the dancers. Montauban supposed this a convincing proof, if any more was needed to what he thought he had before discovered, of Eleanor's inconstancy. His pride was invincible; yet the painful idea that this was the last time he should ever hear the sound of that once-beloved voice—of beholding that engaging and sylph-like form, which had at first rivetted his attention, and since, from the angelic gracefulness of her manners, and superior style of beauty, had challenged his admiration and ardent affection, his feelings became too powerful for utterance—he would have

spoken, but could not. With unutterable anguish, therefore, he fixed his eyes stedfastly on her face, which seemed to say—Read in them, Eleanor, the agony I suffer at thus bidding you farewell for ever. All the pride—the resentment she had felt at this unkind behaviour, vanished in an instant on beholding him thus affected. With a more composed countenance, therefore, which softened by degrees into a bewitching tenderness, Eleanor expressed her regret at having thoughtlessly offended him; and was apparently inclined to retract her former determination, had not the sudden appearance of Ernestine Rodolphus completely annihilated that idea. Deeply did she now regret that her innocent raillery should have terminated so seriously. Surprise at this unexpected visit of Rodolphus, and disappointment on being prevented effecting a reconciliation with her lover, so extremely agitated Eleanor, that all power of speech was denied her; whilst

whilst Montauban, in a distraction of mind not easily to be imagined, at this supposed detection of his rival, struck his hand against his forehead, and exclaimed—" Fool that I am, to have been so long the sport of such an ingrate !"

With difficulty it was that the trembling Eleanor, who, dreading his impetuosity of temper, had remained silent during these violent expressions of his anger, could regain her seat. Rodolphus approached the terrified girl, and in the soft voice of pity endeavoured to calm her fears, by saying that the object of her alarm had departed, and that she was now in safety.

" Gone ! Montauban gone ?" she replied, with the utmost emotion ; and then, on hearing these words in answer —" Yes, and where, if he gives you so much uneasiness, I sincerely hope he will not be easily found again," all her resolution entirely forsook her—the full heart gave vent to her feelings—she wept

wept bitterly; and unheedful of her companion, with anguish lamented the cause of it. Rodolphus, therefore, patiently waited till he observed Eleanor more composed, before he would state the object of his mission; he then said, with much gravity—"Will you permit me, madam, to explain the reason of my present, I fear you think unfortunate visit to Valleroy?" A slight assent being given to that question, he continued—"I am commissioned by my mother, she having the full consent of count Anselmo, to request the honour of your company for a few weeks at the castle of Oldenzo. My father is on his way to join the count at Turin; and as the letter I have just now delivered to the countess expresses, I believe, a wish from her husband for her likewise to join him in Piedmont, I trust my embassy to signora Eleanor will be successful."

This was a new stroke of affliction. Every circumstance of late appeared to increase

increase the misunderstanding which existed between the lovers. In a very collected manner, added to much dignity, Eleanor returned her acknowledgments to Ernestine for the invitation from madame Rodolphus; at the same time, however, she said, with tearful eyes—"Although, during the absence of my benefactors, I should prefer retiring to the sanctuary of Santa Maria, yet if it is contrary to their wishes, and I can be of the least service in softening the regret madame Rodolphus may feel from the loss of the society of her husband, I shall with pleasure accede to the intended honour."

Ernestine, delighted at her conceding to his entreaty, with rapturous gaiety proposed immediately obtaining the consent of the countess Anselmo, who, he said, had, on the receipt of the letter, returned to the castle—"Shall I, therefore," he continued, "have the felicity, signora, of conducting you to her to complete my happiness?" This proposition, however,

ever, of the young Rodolphus, Eleanor declined accepting; it would appear, she thought, as an aggravated insult and cruelty to poor Montauban, whom, notwithstanding all his frailties, she yet so tenderly loved and respected. Ernestine, therefore, was obliged to depart alone. Eleanor then bent her way to the dancers to summon Florisee to attend her to the castle, that she might privately relate this new and unfortunate occurrence, which was to tear her away from the beloved scenes of her youthful days—from all those friends she so fondly revered—the sisterhood of Santa Maria; and, as she melancholy concluded—"To be cast, Florisee, among strangers, to whose manners and customs I am totally ignorant—whose society cannot, for one moment, impart a ray of consolation for the loss of those I leave behind. Unfortunate Eleanor!" she continued to exclaim, "what will become of thee!"

Florisee,

Florisee, much affected at the thoughts of losing her young mistress, (as she used to call her,) in a most urgent manner entreated to be an attendant on her dear signora to the castle of Oldenzo. "I fear," replied Eleanor, "that will not be practicable, without I could be able to obtain the permission of madame Rodolphus; and that I almost despair of, from the knowledge of her general character, which is reported to be imperious and haughty in the extreme; particularly as she knows that I am but a sorry dependant myself on the bounty of my lord Anselmo."

By this time they had arrived at the portico at the western entrance of the castle. Eleanor then promised the young shepherdess that she might depend on her friendship, and that if she could not have her to accompany her to Oldenzo, she should write, by every opportunity, to her dear sister Cecilia, (one of the nuns belonging to the convent of Santa Maria,)

and

and by that means Florisee would constantly hear of her welfare.

The poor girl sighed deeply, and sorrowfully exclaimed, "Ah, my dear lady! who would have thought so pleasant a morning should have turned out so gloomy a day!" Eleanor, not instantly understanding her allusion, she went on to explain—"I mean, signora, that we were all so happy a few hours since; and now, through that disagreeable signior, Ernestine Rodolphus, coming here, we are all so very miserable; for there's you, my lady, I, the countess, and our dear signior Albert de Montauban, all of us in the same unhappy condition; for I saw him running almost out of his wits towards the castle; and one of the villagers says that he saw our young lord mount his horse, and that, followed by Lupino, they rode away like lightning, and were out of sight in a flash."

Roberto, the old steward, now came to summon Eleanor to the countess Anselmo,

mo, who, he said, had expressed a wish to see her in the saloon. Eleanor could not, therefore, now make any inquiry of Florisee respecting the road Montauban had taken, nor devise any means to stop the progress of her lover, to effect a reconciliation before she departed from Valleroy. She instantly obeyed the commands of the countess, and Florisee sorrowfully retired to impart the melancholy intelligence she had received to her companions.

It was with difficulty that Eleanor could gain sufficient courage to appear before the countess after the late unhappy differences between her and Montauban; she expected a very serious remonstrance from his mother, on account of it. As she drew near the saloon, this agitation increased, on hearing expressions of apparent distress from the countess, and the voice of Ernestine Rodolphus seemingly endeavouring to calm the grief of the amiable Almeria.

"Ah

"Ah me!" ejaculated Eleanor, "it is I, dear lady, that am the cause of your unhappiness. Surely I am doomed to be the sport of fortune, and to make all around me as miserable as myself!" Fain would she now have retreated, and in solitude mourned her helpless fate; yet on again bringing to mind that it was the express command of the countess Anselmo to see her immediately, poor Eleanor, having now gained the door of the saloon, knocked softly to obtain admittance. She waited for some minutes, and no answer being returned, she repeated it. No permission having, however, been given for her to enter the apartment, Eleanor sat down in the vestibule, supposing the countess was too much engaged at present to admit her. Her fears became more and more alarming, on hearing shortly that the confessor Lodovico was likewise in the saloon; and although she could not distinguish the subject of discourse, it appeared, by the tone

in

in which he spoke, that he materially differed in opinion with Rodolphus.

Eleanor's anxiety became excessive, rightly judging that some greater calamity must have happened to the countess than the abrupt departure of Montauban, who would have been obliged, if not then, to have left Valleroy on the succeeding day.

A dead silence now reigned, and shortly afterwards Lauretta came out of the saloon in great haste, and was proceeding across the hall to the steward's room. Eleanor followed, and requested her to stop, as she wished to speak with her. Lauretta looking back, and observing Eleanor, exclaimed — "Oh, my poor mistress!" and without reply, continued her way to the chamber of old Roberto. Eleanor, however, determined no longer to endure this painful suspense; the door of the saloon was now open, and without any more hesitation she entered it.

The

The scene that was presented to her sight required much greater resolution than usually belongs to a female heart, to support with firmness the shock her feelings sustained. On a couch, at the farther end of the saloon, was laid the apparent lifeless form of Almeria. Four men habited in black, with drawn sabres, and of the most terrific appearance, stood near the couch, maliciously smiling at the tender offices of the young Rodolphus, who was endeavouring to apply a restorative cordial to the lips of the countess, but of which she could not partake. Close to the unfortunate sufferer was seated the monk Lodovico, his face hid in his cowl, trembling with affright, and seemingly convulsed with grief. Eleanor wisely reflecting on the increased misery, if possible, that might be occasioned by any sudden emotion of alarm at such a spectacle, she forbore to utter a single sentence; but with hands clenched, and eyes uplifted to heaven, she appeared to the surrounding

surrounding attendants as a statue struck with horror. Rodolphus now rose from his humble posture, to bring the afflicted maid to the countess Anselmo, whose spirit, he thought, had already fled to the mansions of the blessed, and to take with him a last look of her saint-like form. A perfect serenity was spread over every feature—a sweet smile yet played on her lips — the faint blush of innocence mantled on her cheek, and told, with never-failing truth, that all was harmony within.

Eleanor was passively led by Rodolphus to the couch, on which was laid the lovely Almeria; but no longer able to support her attempt at fortitude, from the shock her feelings had before sustained, she fainted in the arms of her supporter.

A length of time elapsed ere Eleanor thoroughly recovered her senses; and when she did, it was to be apprized that she was no longer an inhabitant of Valleroy,

leroy, but instead of it, to find herself immured in the castle of Oldenzo. From such a melancholy transition, and the circumstances that led to it, it was with difficulty that she could believe it to be reality, or if so, not executed by mortal hand.

The dawn of day just appearing, in an agitation scarcely to be conceived, Eleanor arose from her bed, and minutely examined the long suite of apartments which led from her chamber, without as yet being convinced that she was an inmate of Oldenzo. A gloomy and death-like silence pervaded this part of the antique mansion. Impanelled oak, and gigantic statues of ebony, were placed in niches along the rooms. The furniture, though faded, bore evident marks of former grandeur, the chairs, the sofas, and the tables, being covered with black velvet, embossed with gold. Girandoles, of the most magnificent structure, were suspended from the vaulted roofs;

the

the windows of painted glass reflecting on them the various colours of the prism, and formed a resplendent lustre. The shriek-owl, however, seemed now to be its only inhabitant; it was nested in some of the drapery of the curtains, and by its terrific cries greatly alarmed the timid Eleanor, until she observed the nightly visitor fly from its hiding-place, and through one of the windows, which was broken, make its way to a large cypress-tree, whose branches nearly overhung this part of the fabric. Through its intermediate spaces were to be seen the lofty Apennines, and a distant view of the Mediterranean, with a passing sail now and then brightening in the horizon, scudding over the world of waters to their destined ports, and perhaps joyful homes. "Alas!" ejaculated the unhappy orphan, on reflecting of the sad vicissitudes of her own life, "I scarcely know the name of so blessed a resort as home; no parent, no kindred of mine,

 will

will ever cheer me with their presence; nor will the smile of welcome, or voice of real affection, ever reach my ear, to calm the sorrows of my heart."

The uncertainty as to the fate of the unfortunate countess Anselmo now rushed again on her memory, and bedewed her face with tears. To have lost the counsel of so affectionate an adviser as the mother of Montauban, for whom, notwithstanding his unkind behaviour towards her, she still felt the tenderest regard, was therefore a subject of real sorrow; and the not being able to obtain the least intelligence respecting them, or in what manner she had been placed in this strange abode, increased her affliction; for as yet, to her idea, she had seen no one since the dreadful scene presented to her sight at Valleroy. A combination of distresses appeared now to surround Eleanor; the mysterious flight of the only benefactor she had ever known—count Anselmo; the supposed death

death of Almeria; and the loss of that affection Montauban had formerly professed for her, which, to her fond imagination, comprised almost every earthly blessing — these all crowded in her mind, so that life seemed now to be of such a heavy weight of misery, she prayed to be released from so frail a tenement, and to seek with ardour her native skies.

In this strain of melancholy ideas, whilst pacing with hurried and unequal steps these gothic chambers, apparently allotted for her convenience, several hours passed, and with them a termination of her solitude. A female attendant of madame Rodolphus now entered the outer room, and not observing her fair charge, exclaimed—" Holy Virgin! what is become of our lady?"—" Here," answered Eleanor, as she hastened towards her, pleased with the idea of meeting a human creature, from whom she could obtain some information of the place in which she was immured; and continued

—"Finding myself better, I have been walking through these splendid rooms for some hours; will you be so obliging as to inform me under whose roof I have the honour of being an inmate?"—"Dear, dear," replied the servant, "do you not know, my lady? Why this is the castle Oldenzo, belonging to signior Rodolphus; and I was now come to see if you was well enough to descend to the saloon, where my mistress is waiting to receive you."

Eleanor then inquired by whom she had been brought there? and the answer she obtained was, in a carriage, on the preceding evening, with the countess's attendant, Lauretta, who had, however, immediately returned to Valleroy, which, she said, was a scene of the most unexampled confusion and misery.

"Ah me!" replied Eleanor, "I now well recollect each circumstance, and dread to be apprized of what my heart fearfully tells me is true—that I have no longer

longer a friend on earth!"—"I am sure, my lady, if what I hear is fact," ejaculated the woman, "such friends as the count and countess Anselmo are no great loss to you. It's a pity, however, she had not confessed her crime, and received absolution, before the vengeance of justice overtook her iniquities!"

"What do you mean by these allusions?" exclaimed Eleanor; "speak intelligibly, that I may comprehend you." The commanding manner in which this was uttered somewhat intimidated its auditor, who therefore declined any further conference, by saying that her mistress would be displeased if she staid any longer. She then made a low curtsey to the astonished and almost heart-broken Eleanor, and departed.

## CHAP. IX.

What equal torment to the griefe of mind,
And pining anguish hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itself with thoughts unkinde,
And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leache's art
Yield such a sore, that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart? SPENCER.

IMAGINATION, cruel harbinger of grief, that conjures up to the mind the most frightful images of horror, to counterbalance the momentary effusion of joy, in the breasts it unhappily deigns to reside in, now acted with its malign influence on the too-keen sensibility of the amiable Eleanor. Rumours of an unpleasant nature, respecting the mysterious death

death of the late general de Montauban, in which, but too true, the names of the count and countess Anselmo were implicated, had often attracted her attention. Confident as she was of their innocence, and that this injurious report proceeded from some dire foe, who was jealous of their felicity, it had, however, always met with the contempt it merited; yet now, under the present circumstances, the terrific appearance of those men she had seen at Valleroy, the distress pictured on the countenances of the young Rodolphus, of Lauretta, and the concealed grief of the confessor Lodovico, spoke forcibly the truth that the strangers were ministers of justice; and therefore the idea rushed instantly to her mind, that the fatal blow had been struck, the axe of the executioner already levelled at the defenceless head of her benefactor, count Anselmo. No ray of hope illuminated the course of these terrific visions, which alternately succeeded each other in her bewildered

brain. She deeply mourned the loss of the amiable mother of Montauban, yet was it combined with an expression of envy. "Momentary," sighed Eleanor, "was her pains, to gain those blessed mansions of the just—eternal will be her felicity. Soul up-lifting thought!" she continued, "which can alone support the human frame to endure with resignation the various and lamentable miseries of this sublunary state."

A mind so tempered with religion's fervent spark of ethereal essence, cannot, however, be long under the dominion of any earthly passion. Eleanor's education, from her earliest remembrance, had been imbibed in the confines of a monastery —that of Santa Maria was considered the most strict in discipline of all religious orders established in Italy, since the appointment of the confessor Lodovico, who was a man possessed of great learning, applying it always to the most beneficial purposes, for the welfare of

those

those under his jurisdiction: in possession of immense wealth, his charitable donations were numberless; and it may be truly said of him, in the divine language of Scripture, "He caused the widow and the orphan's heart to sing with joy." To this saint-like man, therefore, did Eleanor determine to have recourse. She had felt respect and duty for count Anselmo, but the confessor Lodovico she had ever truly loved and venerated as a parent.

Several days now elapsed, and no second invitation from madame Rodolphus arriving, it occasioned some surprise, and likewise disappointment to Eleanor; yet in her present state of mind, it was certainly of benefit, as it allowed her to indulge the first emotions of her grief, and by that means restore her mind to some degree of tranquillity. She then began to reflect on the most efficient method of addressing Lodovico, to request her return to the convent of Santa Maria,

where now, bereft as she was of every worldly friend, all her wishes centered. Perhaps, too, there might arise in her breast a latent hope that such a proceeding would cause some satisfaction to Montauban, and quiet his suspicions respecting Ernestine Rodolphus. From the maternal loss she supposed the former to have sustained, it was much her wish to have written to Albert, to condole with him on the melancholy event; but she knew not where to direct her letter; therefore that idea was instantly abandoned; and in her more collected and serious moments, applauded herself that she did not endeavour to acquire the information of his residence; for what might have been considered as deference and attention, in the exalted sphere she had hitherto moved in, as the acknowledged ward of count Anselmo, might now, she reflected, in adversity, be deemed an insult.

On the fourth day of her residence at

Oldenzo,

Oldenzo, no longer being able to plead illness as a reason for her confinement, and supposing the signora would be highly displeased, Eleanor, with trembling steps, left her apartment, and directed her course to the lower part of the castle, to obtain an interview with its hostess, and to make an apology for not attending her commands on a previous invitation. The long-winding galleries through which she passed were magnificently adorned with paintings of battle-pieces, and the portraits of the ancestors of Rodolphus, in splendid gold frames of the most curious workmanship. Candelabras, filled with burning incense, were arranged in various parts to emit fragrance, and to throw an additional light on those beautiful relics of antiquity.

To the left of the lower gallery was an extensive library, and as the door of it was open, curiosity induced her to enter. At the further end of the apartment, she

observed a lady, very elegantly attired, seated at a table, perusing some papers, and with so much attention, that the appearance of Eleanor did not disturb her employment. Politeness, however, she thought, required of her to make na apology to the stranger for the intrusion; and in the act of doing so, Eleanor discovered she was addressing madame Rodolphus, who instantly arose from her seat, and with much condescension welcomed her unexpected visitant. The apprehensions of this interview, so much dreaded by Eleanor, having subsided, and in so favourable a manner, her spirits became calmer, and with tolerable steadiness she answered to her various inquiries respecting the sisterhood of Santa Maria, many of whom she was personally acquainted with; but the one madame Rodolphus more particularly alluded to, and of whom she wished for information, was Cecilia, who, from her great proficiency in music, which she had acquired

at

at the convent, had obtained for her, amongst her intimates, the name of St. Cecilia, the lady to whom Eleanor was so extremely partial, that she had ever assigned to her the tender appellation of sister; and notwithstanding she was many years the senior of Eleanor, there reigned such congeniality of sentiment between them, such similarity of disposition in their pursuits, that seldom were they asunder. At a very early period of her age, ere seventeen summers had rolled their course, Cecilia had been compelled to take the veil, from the express command of her parents, whose names and condition in life had ever been kept a secret from all the sisterhood, excepting the lady abbess and the monk Lodovico, to whom she had oft, with tearful eyes, acquainted Eleanor her history was but too well known, and by them much lamented. The deep melancholy with which this unfortunate nun was oppressed was such, that at times fears were excited

cited lest it might lead at last to mental derangement. At those periods, none had the power of soothing or allaying her grief but Eleanor, who, from possessing likewise great taste in singing, and power of execution, as well as great knowledge in instrumental music, whilst leaning on the bosom of her young friend, shed tears of joy at the performance; and by degrees, so far lost the remembrance of her own sorrows, as to join in the noble anthems so expressively delivered by the pious Eleanor. These harmonic strains, being always a signal of the nun's returning composure of mind, and as they were generally performed after evening vespers, the confessor Lodovico was often a delighted auditor. Repeatedly had he expressed to Eleanor his opinion of Cecilia's conduct, which, he said, was truly praiseworthy, combining in it every Christian virtue, and a perfect model for the female sex. So great, indeed, was the monk's veneration

for

for this hapless nun, that Eleanor had often observed him to turn pale at the very sight of her, and his whole frame become so agitated, as totally to be unable to continue his devotional duty. Not so felt Cecilia; a pale serenity, accompanied with profound respect, alone marked her behaviour towards this holy man. She seldom conversed with any one, Eleanor excepted, without whose society, she would frequently exclaim, the life of her soul was annihilated. For this reason it was that madame Rodolphus so particularly now inquired respecting the health of Cecilia. She however could relate no satisfactory intelligence of her friend, not having been permitted to visit the monastery since her late residence at Valleroy.

On observing, therefore, that the very name of Cecilia had grieved her young guest, she desisted from further inquiry, and likewise preserved the same silence in regard to the unfortunate count and

countess

countess Anselmo, only observing, that she expected Ernestine from Valleroy the succeeding morning.

The table was now spread with every delicacy the season could afford, by order of madame Rodolphus; and to enjoy exclusively the company and conversation of her guest, the servants were dismissed during the repast. Amongst the various topics introduced by the polite hostess, Eleanor learnt with surprise, that it was her intention to set off, in a few days, for Arezzo, for the purpose of conducting her daughter on her return to Oldenzo, and that she expected the pleasure of being accompanied by our heroine. This was an honour by no means acceptable to the lovely girl, who had hoped, by that time, to have been again enshrined in the sanctuary of Santa Maria; she however acquiesced with the proposal, determining patiently to endure the evil she could not, with propriety, avoid.

On account of Eleanor's ill state of health,

health, madame Rodolphus permitted her to withdraw to her chamber at an early hour of the evening; and to prevent troubling the domestics, who all appeared to her insolent and assuming, she would not accept their attendance. Eleanor respectfully took leave of madame Rodolphus, who, as she was retiring, intimated to her melancholy guest, that she would be under no necessity of confining herself during her stay at Oldenzo, but requested she would pass the mornings in walking, riding, or any other pursuits most congenial to her taste and inclination; then wishing her good-night, madame Rodolphus again commenced the employment she was before engaged in, of perusing the manuscript papers, apparently with the deepest attention.

The night was extremely boisterous, and the wind whistled with dismal moan, as Eleanor, with her taper, ascended with timid footsteps the winding staircases, and glided along the spacious galleries,

to

to reach her destination. An indescribable emotion of sudden fear overwhelmed her as she paused to listen to the inclemency of the storm, which was more violent, and acted with greater fury, than any she had ever remembered. The heavy peals of thunder, which apparently rolled over the edifice, seemed to threaten every instant its dissolution into a mass of ruins. Eleanor now regretted that she had not accepted of the attendance of a servant. Being completely overcome with terror, she resolved to return again to the library, until the storm was somewhat abated; when proceeding for that purpose, to her great surprise, she found she had taken a wrong direction; and in endeavouring to extricate herself from this new difficulty, her terrors became so alarming, as totally to forbid her proceeding; she therefore sat down on one of the steps to recover her fright, and observed, opposite her resting-place, an apartment, which, from its appearance,

seemed

seemed to have been appropriated for a prison. The door of it was of massy iron, and as it was open, she could discern, from a waning moon, which the clouds made appear at intervals, that the windows, which were doubly grated, were so high as utterly to exclude the sight from any person within. A few oaken chairs, and a table of the same materials, were all the furniture the room appeared to contain.

In every gust of the wind, Eleanor fancied she heard the sound of human misery appealing to the unmerciful elements for relief. With breathless agony she now rose from her seat, and endeavoured to descend the staircase; her limbs, however, refused their office, and totally deprived her of the power of escaping from this desolate situation. The delusion of her senses became so great, that she supposed not only the sounds of a human voice were heard, but that she could distinguish the footsteps of a person

son walking in the opposite apartment. A sudden emotion of courageous resolution impelled her for the second time to rise, that she might be convinced of its reality, as from the innocency of her life, she judged that no being of supernatural or human form would attempt to injure her. Under this impression of mind, of which, however, a nearer acquaintance with the world has but too often proved the fallacy, Eleanor arose, and taking the taper, advanced to the door of this dreary apartment. Some deliberation was again required before she could attempt to enter. A profound silence reigned around; the wind had almost died away, as if worn out with previous exertion, and had now sought repose, to calm and allay the sad effects of its fury. Ashamed, however, of this indecision and weakness, Eleanor proceeded into the interior.

She saw no one. The room was of an oblique direction, and of extensive length:

length: as she continued her course, her feet got entangled in some chains which lay on the floor, and it was with difficulty she could keep herself from falling; this circumstance corroborated the idea before entertained, of its having been a place of confinement. In extricating herself from them, she perceived an iron ring, which, from its appearance, seemed to be the fastening of a secret door in the flooring, and by which, she imagined, the person she had seen descended. "Ah me!" sighed Eleanor, as she bent her eyes on these dreadful shackles of slavery, "some poor wretch, perhaps, is here groaning under the tyranny of Italian laws, untimely cut off from the blessings of society—the rewards of fame—or the more alluring and peaceful palm of honest industry. Dark era of despotism!" she exclaimed—"lamentable age! when a word—a look, supposed derogatory to tyrannic power, is deemed sufficient to plunge

plunge its devoted victim in a living tomb!"

These reflections brought a greater degree of courage to the trembling heart of Eleanor, and strength of mind sufficient to put into execution what these thoughts suggested. "Perhaps," she continued, "to me is given the power of unveiling the specious garb of hypocrisy—" The name of Rodolphus once escaped her lips, but was as suddenly discarded, as an idea wrong, and even unpardonable to indulge. The present period of the life of Eleanor was, however, teeming with events most distressful to her repose. Count Anselmo, her revered benefactor, whose life, if yet spared from the hands of the executioner, was still immured in a dungeon, she reflected, such as this was, loaded with ignominy, and the revilings of popular vengeance; by whose fiat, not only an individual, but thousands, are often immolated,

molated, to appease their ungovernable fury.

As Eleanor now withdrew from the spot which had arrested attention, and commanded her commiseration, an emotion of shuddering horror pervaded her, from again fancying that she heard a stifled sound of human distress issuing from the place beneath. On turning to listen if it was repeated, and in looking to the further end of this dread abode, she observed the pale glimmering of a lamp, and from its light discovered that it was placed on a kind of pedestal; that this part of the room was partitioned from the remainder by long iron bars, apparently fixed in the vaulted roof. Eleanor now exclaimed—"It is no longer a delusion—it is real woe that appals my listening ear; why, therefore, should I be afraid?" and again, as reproaching herself for her timidity, she continued—"For shame, Eleanor! to deny your aid to a fellow-creature in distress, when

when a time may come that you will stand in need of it yourself." With this reflection, ever so deeply engraven in her breast by her preceptors, and so necessary to be inculcated in the minds of youth, our heroine, therefore, now acted up to its dictates. She approached the grating, supposing it might lead, by an easier way, to the room beneath, from which the voice proceeded. Her progress was however arrested, by discovering, on the inside of these massy bars, a deplorable object, apparently a man, although the sex was scarcely discernible, from the dimness of the light, and the figure being enveloped in a long wrapper. On a pallet covered with straw lay this mass of wretchedness, and, to appearance, asleep, except when the chains with which he was manacled, part of which lay hanging on the ground, and at the least movement, rattled, which appeared to make his repose disturbed and uneasy. This was a piteous sight to the already

already terrified Eleanor, the more so from her being convinced that the expressions of distress she had heard did not proceed from this unhappy prisoner, but must have arisen from some other in the room beneath. "Oh Heavens!" she now exclaimed aloud, "into what an abode am I secluded—a common receptacle, perhaps, for culprits and outlaws! They have deceived me—it cannot be the castle of Rodolphus in which I am an inmate!"

This was a moment of trial. Doubt, terror, and pity, by turns succeeded to harrass and distract her bewildered imagination. The first, and most commendable, was, that if she attempted to awake the prisoner, and listen to the story of his woes, there might be a vigilant guard so concealed as to overhear their conversation, and to prevent publicity of this circumstance, be the destruction of them both. The second, the consequent terror she felt at addressing a stranger, who

 might

might be of bad character, and deserving of his present fate: "Perhaps," thought Eleanor, "a murderer!" yet to retire from the scene of misery, like too many sensitive beings, who have an abhorrence to contemplate or relieve wretchedness, where it is repugnant to their fine feelings, was a species of cruelty, however, of which her amiable disposition was incapable.

It was impossible for Eleanor to continue much longer in her present situation; the icy chillness of the dungeon, (for so it might well be called,) and the agitation of her mind, affected her almost to fainting; in a low tone of voice, therefore, she said, "For pity's sake, my friend, inform me how to return to the lower apartments of the castle, for in the intricacies of the passages of this extensive building, I have lost my way." She paused; the man still slept. In a louder tone, Eleanor repeated her question. He started up from his bed in horror, and

flew

flew towards her; she fell senseless on the ground.

The rattling of the chains—the death-like countenance and ghastly figure of the man, as, savage-like, he appeared to dart upon his prey, produced that instantaneous suspension of every faculty. No relief could be afforded to the sufferer; the wretched cause of this misfortune could not move beyond the length of his chain; nor, if he had, is it likely the poor object would have tendered his services. From the ignorant superstition of the age, he believed her to be a supernatural being, and the fright occasioned in him, by such an appearance, caused a momentary delirium. With hands clenched, and eyes raised up to heaven, for some time he continued in mental prayer.

All-powerful nature at length restored Eleanor to animation. It was, however, with extreme difficulty that she could support her trembling frame from re-

lapsing into her former state; half rising, she supported her fragile form by clinging to the bars of the prison. "Angel of Heaven!" exclaimed the man, as he endeavoured, in a kneeling attitude, to draw nearer the supposed vision, "pity, oh! pity the sorrows of a miserable outcast, who, for years, has suffered captivity within these dreary walls, whose every cry is but the sound of lasting misery!" As these expressions excited less of terror in Eleanor than the singular wretchedness of the man's appearance, she faintly said, with eyes bent to the ground, fearful of again encountering the frantic looks of the prisoner—"Alas! what can I do to assuage your sorrows, for my situation here is scarcely less afflicting? Indeed, good man," she continued, sighing, "I have no power to help you." Eleanor paused, reflecting on the danger that might occur from thus openly expressing her sentiments to a stranger. The captive now started from his humble posture,

posture, and exclaimed, with maddened voice—"There is no hope for me!—Why do I shrink at ridding myself of this mortal load—this cumbrous weight of clay?" He then dashed the massy chains against his head, exclaiming—"Now to contend with the damning spirits of darkness and despair!" From the stunning blows, he fell prostrate on the ground, which was in an instant covered with blood. Eleanor, supposing that the unfortunate maniac was deprived of life, gave a terrific scream, and loudly called for assistance. She soon heard the bolts of the secret door undrawing, and in another moment it was opened, and a dark lanthorn was placed near it. With indescribable emotion, Eleanor now saw a person ascend from the trap-door, and carefully closing it after him, begin to direct his course towards the prisoner. For self-preservation, being certain, if found in these mysterious apartments, she should fall a

sacrifice to her temerity, Eleanor now glided to a distant part of the chamber; and as the figure continued to approach, with great presence of mind she retreated away from the direction of the light, and concealed herself behind the part of a projecting wall at the extremity of the room. The agony of her feelings at such a dreadful scene is past description; she observed this man take from his pocket a key, with which he unlocked another door near the grating, and almost directly after saw him enter the prison, and in sullen silence, with the utmost apparent composure, take off the chains of the dying captive.

This was a favourable moment for escaping these midnight horrors, the castle bell having just tolled the hour of twelve; and however desirous Eleanor might be to witness the termination of this mysterious proceeding, and to know whether there was any chance of the prisoner's recovery, yet she wisely thought

of

of the perils that would inevitably attend such a curiosity. It however required great resolution to attempt even escaping at this juncture. Her light was extinguished, and the part of the room in which she was concealed so narrow, that she must pass the grating close to where the man was unchaining the unhappy object, who, by his delirium, had been the cause of so much just-felt terror on the part of Eleanor, and deprived her of hearing a relation of his sufferings, and, in the end, perhaps of assuaging them. There was no time to be lost, however; indecision of mind sometimes produces the most lamentable effects; she therefore with cautious footsteps left her concealment; the man, whom she now supposed was a guard, being employed in clearing away the blood which had congealed on the disfigured countenance of the poor captive, Eleanor moved onwards without interruption. A sudden impulse for a moment arrested her pro-

gress as she drew near the small iron door that had admitted him into the prison; the key of it still remained in the lock, and the dark lanthorn was placed close to the door. Eleanor took up the light, and although every limb shook with apprehensions of being discovered in the theft by the ferocious guard, who was, however, still intent upon his employment, she instantly turned the spring of the lanthorn, and taking it with her, escaped out of this dreadful apartment, and with as much haste as her faltering frame would admit of, again descended the staircase leading to the winding gallery, in the intricacies of which Eleanor had before missed the direction to her chamber. Now, however, she more minutely inspected it, and soon discovered her error. To the left of the gallery was a small door, and on opening it, she found, to her satisfaction, that she had arrived at the top of the grand marble staircase, which had attracted her attention

tion in the morning; and at the bottom of which was the suit of apartments allotted for her use. With a light footstep, therefore, and a beating heart, Eleanor regained her chamber, and having carefully fastened the door, to prevent pursuit from the supposed jailor of the prison, she knelt and returned thanks to Providence for having delivered her from the impending danger in the mysterious abode of the unfortunate captive. Many were the reflections that crowded on her mind respecting this singular adventure; it greatly augmented her fears, and now created an abhorrence to continue an inmate in a place where a fellow-creature (if he still survived) would be suffering the extreme of human misery. Yet did the tender feelings of her disposition revolt at flying from distress, when there might be a probability of alleviating it. Almost exhausted from the agitation of her spirits, she now threw herself upon her couch, and wept bitterly for some

hours; to sleep, however, was impossible, in the present distracted state of her mind.

The morning dawned; the sun arose, and darted his blessed rays into the chamber of Eleanor, yet could not its warmth cheer for one moment the drooping soul of the amiable girl. An icy chillness pervaded every faculty, as the horrors of the preceding night came, with redoubled force, to her recollection. For a time it absorbed every idea, and obliterated the remembrance of her own unhappiness. The native benevolence of her disposition, to procure the comforts of others, was strongly demonstrated in her present intention, that she would, if possible, learn the history of the poor captive, and, if innocent, effect his release, should Heaven in pity have spared him to repent the crime of self-destruction, even if her own life fell a sacrifice to her humanity—"Such an act," she proudly exclaimed, "may prove the

means

means of tearing off the mask of villainy, and make the oppressor tremble."

Inspired by the thought, and with resolution far beyond what a female is generally endowed with, Eleanor now revolved in her mind the most efficient method to carry this her hazardous plan into execution. On mature reflection, she determined that some days should intervene before she would again attempt to revisit the prisoner, as it was extremely probable he would for some time be strictly guarded; and feeling a repugnance to go unattended, Eleanor proposed to question an old man, who, on the preceding evening, had come to madame Rodolphus for orders, as, from his superior manner and appearance to the rest of the domestics, she judged him to be a steward in the family; there seemed, in her opinion, to be an honest bluntness in the man, which augured a humane heart. To this person, therefore, she determined to reveal her mysterious adventure, and by

every persuasion in her power, if the object of commiseration should be deserving of interference in his behalf, induce this old man to second her intention of endeavouring to release him from his captivity.

A servant now entered the apartment, to announce that breakfast was ready in the saloon; Eleanor, therefore, although extremely indisposed, instantly attended the summons, from a faint hope that Ernestine might be arrived at the castle, and that she should acquire some intelligence of the unfortunate count Anselmo, and a more satisfactory account than what she had heard so maliciously related by the servant, of the recent events which had taken place at Valleroy.

## CHAP. X.

Be these sad sighs confirmers of thy words?
Then speak again, not all thy former tale,
But this one, whether thy tale be true.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE second interview between madame Rodolphus and Eleanor was very different from the preceding one; there appeared in the former a peculiarly affected and overacted civility towards her young guest, which at times changed, however, to a contemptuous irony—"You do not look refreshed by your repose; I hope no evil genii disturbed you last night?" inquired madame, fixing her eyes steadfastly on those of Eleanor: to which she replied mournfully, "I am never under the

the influence of such fears as those—it is only real misery that can have that effect:" and continued, "I grieve for the misfortunes of my friends, the noble count and countess Anselmo, whose lives, if yet spared from the machinations of their accusers, are, I am afraid, doomed to suffer every indignity."—"My acquaintance with the Anselmos is very slight," she superciliously answered; and continued—"The noble lord, my husband, has, I believe, professed some degree of friendship for those people; I have therefore no doubt but that he has endeavoured to mitigate their mutual crime, and from his great and deserved authority in the senate, will most likely soften the decree of death into lasting imprisonment." This ungracious speech finished, a congratulatory one followed, at the protection afforded Eleanor, at this juncture, in the castle of Oldenzo.

"My grateful thanks are certainly due for such kindness," she replied; and with

with much humility continued—"Yet, my honoured lady, with your permission, as I think solitude more desirable for me at this unhappy period, I should prefer seeking an asylum in the convent of Santa Maria, and there to remain until my spirits in some degree recover the dreadful shock they have sustained." The wife of Rodolphus evinced no surprise at this intelligence, politely expressing it was her wish that Eleanor should not be influenced, by any sense of obligation, to induce the acting contrary to what she thought most conducible to her welfare; at the same time she continued—"I hope you will favour me with your company at Arezzo, as I shall commence my journey in a few hours, having already given the necessary directions for that purpose." This sudden proposition of leaving the castle was as unpleasant as it had been unlooked for by Eleanor, who had hoped, before that event took place, to have endeavoured to effect the rescue of

the

the poor captive, for whom she felt so great an interest, that next to that of her friends at Valleroy, upon whose fate she knew depended that of her own happiness or misfortune through life, no circumstance had ever created so much her commiseration, and so great a desire to alleviate it.

Various were the excuses she feigned, in hopes of being left at Oldenzo in the absence of its possessor; but all was unavailing; the resolution of the proud hostess of the castle was not to be changed. Eleanor was apprized that she must instantly prepare for her departure; and to expedite it, rang the bell, and gave orders for her woman to attend on Eleanor to her chamber, and with the greatest speed to arrange the necessary apparel for her journey, and to pack it up in one of her own travelling trunks; thus making sure of the company of her melancholy guest to Arezzo.

With more reluctance than she had ever

ever remembered to have felt, Eleanor now retired with the servant to perform the commands of madame Rodolphus. She seated herself near the window of her apartment, and having pointed out to the domestic where the clothes lay, Eleanor began with a pencil to record on her tablets the principal tenor of the communication to be sent to the confessor of Santa Maria, in which she entreated to be again admitted into that monastery on her return from Arezzo. The servant having now commenced her occupation, began to inquire of Eleanor what apparel she should select for her use? "Any that you please, for I am quite indifferent as to my appearance there, I assure you," answered Eleanor, somewhat disconcerted at the interruption.—"Indifferent!" retorted the loquacious waiting-woman, "when there will be such grand doings on my lady's arrival at Arezzo; for do you not know, signora," she continued, "that it is the wedding of her daughter with count

count Martini, a Genoese nobleman, and that there are to be grand fêtes given to commemorate the happy occasion?"

"Is the attachment mutual?" inquired Eleanor: to which her informant replied —"Yes, I believe so; as much as can be expected between these great people, where equality of birth and worldly grandeur are all that is coveted by our nobility—Talking of that," said the woman, "your situation, signora, must be very uncomfortable, so nearly allied as you are to this family."—"I allied to them?" inquired the astonished Eleanor, to whom this intelligence had almost acted as a sentence of annihilation.—"Yes, in truth, signora," repeated Aldrude; "and if you'll faithfully promise not to utter a syllable that I have told of it, I'll tell you all my mistress said about your history before you came to the castle." Eleanor then assured the woman she never would divulge from whence she obtained the information. With this,

Aldrude

Aldrude commenced the following account of the lovely girl's supposed birth, and relationship to the family of Rodolphus, first premising, however, in the usual style of tale-bearers, that she should by no means have revealed the secrets of her mistress, if she had continued to confide in her; but as of late she had been extremely reserved, and treated her with indifference, and even harshness, Aldrude thought she was fully authorized, therefore, to revenge this change of treatment from the proud, and we may add, from having cherished, as a confidant, a menial servant, weak and contemptible madame Rodolphus.

The story of Aldrude being prolix, and mingled with a variety of uninteresting matter, quite foreign to the subject of discourse, we shall, therefore, only point out the following, as particularly relating to the supposed birth of the orphan, and which appeared to the afflicted

Eleanor

Eleanor deserving of some degree of credit:—

The father of the present signior Rodolphus, Aldrude informed her, was reputed to have been a man of austere temper, and extremely vicious in his principles. He married early in life the only daughter of a Roman of high distinction, named Claudius, who, on his death-bed, bequeathed to signior Rodolphus the guardianship of his nephew, a youth about seventeen years of age, the only son of a beloved sister, who, with her husband, signior Oldenzo, whilst on their voyage to Messina, were unfortunately shipwrecked on the coast of Sicily, to the inexpressible grief of their relations, all having mourned their loss with the liveliest sorrow. "It is said," continued Aldrude, "that as soon as this wicked old man was in possession of the papers and documents left to him in care by his wife's father, and which, at the expiration

piration of a few years, would have given to the young Oldenzo the inheritance of this castle, and the immense estate contiguous, he contrived to have him assassinated; whilst other reports are, that he escaped the persecution of signior Rodolphus, and fled to Sicily—that he employed various means to recover the fortune left him by his uncle, but without effect, his unjust guardian having destroyed the will, and every thing relative to the proving of it; the poor young man, therefore, they say, soon after died, in a mendicant state, in a hovel on the sea-coast, near the spot where the bodies of his parents were washed on shore from the wreck; and in which place there is even now to be seen a beacon, erected by him, to guard mariners from the fatal rocks on which their ship was lost.

"Whatever was his destiny, this far is certain," said Aldrude, "that the poor orphan,

orphan, and rightful heir to this castle, it having belonged to his father's ancestors for these several hundred years, never obtained even a moidore from his wicked guardian, by whose family this immense place is therefore now in quiet possession." She then proceeded to inform Eleanor of what most concerned her; that the old man, besides his son, the present signior Rodolphus, had a daughter named *Eleonora*."

Having laid a particular stress on that word, the trembling girl, anxious to discover some flaw in the narrative by which she could persuade the woman of the injustice of the supposition respecting her being allied to the family, said hastily—"That's not my name."—"Something like it, signora," she replied with a significant smile; and continued—"but be patient, lady, and I'll convince you more about it. Well, I believe I left off where I was going to

acquaint

acquaint you of the history of the old man's daughter. Ah, they say she was a very amiable lady, and that she was betrothed to a very fine gentleman in a distant country." Aldrude then began a long account of the charitable virtues of Eleonora, that she was the idol of every person who knew her, and beautiful as an angel. She then proceeded to relate, that from the intimacy which subsisted between the possessors of the castles of Valleroy and Oldenzo, they were accustomed to pass with each other several months in every year; that Eleonora, on her attaining the age of fifteen, and being just emancipated from a school-room, and the trammels of a severe governess and duenna, was invited, with the rest of the family of Rodolphus, to pass her birthday at Valleroy.

The library bell now rung twice, which was a summons for Aldrude to attend on her mistress; she promised, however, to return as soon as possible, to finish the story,

story, for the completion of which Eleanor now began to feel the most painful curiosity.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XI.

The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood,
Or else misgrafted in respect of years;
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;
Or if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary, as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth:
And ere a man hath power to say—Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

SHAKESPEARE.

In that kind of sullen suspense which pervades the breast of a youthful warrior

on the eve of combat, wherein he supposes rests all his future hopes of glory and renown, and with that fatal despair which follows such aspiring thoughts, almost to madness if unsuccessful, did Eleanor ruminate on the train of evils which would surround her, if the account given by Aldrude should prove authentic. From what had been already related, she easily anticipated the sequel. In a state of mind the most deplorable at these suggestions of her fancy, did Eleanor pace the chamber, and listen to every footstep that sounded along the hall, in hopes that it might be Aldrude, for whose promised return she now watched with the utmost impatience, as being the fiat of her future destiny.

The disposition of Eleanor was naturally inclined to reflection and the love of solitude. A conventual life, therefore, had been her first wish—the summit of her happiness. She had repeatedly applied to count Anselmo for permission

mission to take the veil, as most suited, she said, to her inclination, and proper in her orphan state. The count, however, had been ever averse to such a solemn proceeding, until some time after his marriage with the widow of general de Montauban, when, from some peculiar hidden cause, he became the strenuous advocate of that which before he had so strongly deprecated.

"Strange perversity of human nature!" he exclaimed, during a conversation which he had with Eleanor on the subject, when, to his great amazement, he found she hesitated, and requested more time to be allowed her for consideration on this most important point. The solution of this enigma, and supposed fickleness of character, had the count been then apprized of one occurrence, would have been extremely easy, and no longer to be wondered at. The pious, tender, susceptible Eleanor, had not, at the period of her application to

her benefactor for embracing the veil, seen an Albert de Montauban. No sooner did that event occur, that a total revolution was instantaneously effected, both in the mind and sentiments of Eleanor. The unerring shaft pierced deep, nor is it easy to say of these young people who most it wounded, Albert or Eleanor. Her heart then acknowledged thew orld had charms, in which she could be happy. Albert was her world, and in him she comprised every earthly blessing. Every thought not bent on Albert she considered as a crime to love's fidelity; even in her prayers he was remembered; and each sigh, each tear, was consecrated to him whilst reflecting on his virtues, (and in true lowliness of mind,) her own insufficiency. Passion, the most refined, pure, uncontaminated as the spark of ethereal essence, revelled in the breast of Eleanor. Ah! lovely, unsuspecting fair-one, little did you then imagine that the sublime friendship, which you

were

were cherishing with so much ardour, would occasion you the sufferings of years—perhaps during the remainder of your future life!

On the evening Eleanor met her lover so unexpectedly at the temple, incensed at his ungracious, harsh treatment, she vowed, in the warmth of her displeasure, to withdraw herself from his sight for ever, by becoming (what she had with so much ardour solicited) one of the sisterhood of Santa Maria. Her anger, however, soon subsided; she yet lingered in the centre of attraction, and the vow, too hastily uttered, repented of, and soon forgotten. Now, however, Eleanor supposed imperious duty would command the sacrifice, and should her afflicting suggestions prove true, a most willing votary, as without the object for whom she had alone desisted from it, the world would be a desert.

She again seated herself, and continued

the important letter to the confessor Lodovico, and was again interrupted. Aldrude re-entered the chamber, to inform her that madame Rodolphus had altered her intention, and did not leave the castle until the succeeding morning. This intelligence was so far agreeable to Eleanor, as it would allow more time for communicating her thoughts to her revered preceptor, and likewise a probability that she might be enabled to gain some information of the unfortunate prisoner.

"My lady likewise says," continued the woman, "that as she shall be much engaged this evening, she will not require your attendance."—"Attendance!" exclaimed Eleanor, with marked emphasis and displeasure at so degrading an epithet; yet on reflecting a moment afterwards, that in her present forlorn situation, she must endeavour to humble the inborn pride with which she was possessed, which had, however, often silenced

silenced the meditated attacks of presumptuous wealth, awed the fool, and commanded respect from her inferiors.

Poverty is alone the school for pride, and a state of dependence its punishment: Eleanor felt it so. Instantly stifling, therefore, the sentiments of disgust she was inclined to feel towards the possessors of Oldenzo, and anxious to hear the remaining account of their history, she replied—"Very well," and closing her unfinished letter to the confessor, requested Aldrude to recommence her narrative.

"Oh yes, signora," she said with eagerness, "I have returned expressly for that purpose; but I must first fasten the chamber-door, for fear of interruption; yet before I do that," she continued in a whisper, "I think I had best look about the apartments, for fear some person should be concealed in them to overhear our conversation; for I do assure you, signora, we have many spies

lurking about this horrible castle, who are employed by Rodolphus to give him information of every thing that passes here in his absence." This was a favourable opportunity for Eleanor to question her respecting the mysterious stranger; and as she judged the woman to be sincere in her professions of regard for her, and of entertaining a rooted enmity towards her employers, as soon as Aldrude had been satisfied that there were no intruders near, and secured the outer door of the apartments, she related her singular adventure on the preceding evening, which was only now and then interrupted by the following ejaculations her auditor made of—"How surprising! —Oh, what a wicked master to suffer a human creature to be starved to death! —and how wonderful, I that am continually prying about other people's affairs, should not have heard of it!" With a sudden burst of feeling, however, and passion, on hearing Eleanor's description of

of this person, and wretched appearance of the prisoner, she now cried out—"I'll lay my life on it 'tis my poor dear Trapano that he's got caged up there!"—"And who is Trapano?" inquired Eleanor.—"Trapano!" she exclaimed; "why, my loving husband, to be sure, signora, and the best fisherman in all Tuscany. Little did he think, poor dear man, that he should so soon be caught in a net himself. Oh, the wicked, insensible, hollow-hearted signior!" Some explanation being required as to the meaning of these apostrophes, Aldrude smilingly replied—"I should suppose, young lady, it is needless for me to say, that my lord likes, as well as other lords do, to have a pretty girl to attend on them; therefore says he to me one day—'Aldrude, how comes it that you prefer servitude better than living at home with your husband?'—'Please you, my lord,' says I, 'because we could never agree who should be master, Trapano or I. He swore he would,

would, and I swore that he should not.' 'Then,' said he, 'the fish may all remain in the sea, for the devil fetch me if I bring up one of them to support such a headstrong, ignorant puss as you are, Aldrude.' So, my lord,' I answered, 'poverty soon overtook us, and as I found good living very essential to obtain good looks, I accepted your lordship's service, and left poor Trapano to take care of himself.' He then asked me if I would wish to obtain him a more comfortable situation; when, to make short of the story, signora, as I was much delighted at the idea, my lord got Trapano to be made a grenadier, which he accepted, and I have never heard the least account of him since. Now, signora, don't you perceive the drift of this pretended benefit?" said Aldrude; "it is to gain my affections, for my lord is desperately in love with me, and so he has shut up my good man in a prison to obtain his wife; my lord shall not, however, receive the

least

least favour from me, for I detest the very sight of him," continued the self-conceited Aldrude; "and therefore I'll release the poor prisoner, you may depend on it, lady."

"But how will you effect that, as he is so strongly chained, and guarded by the man whom I have told you of? Without great care you certainly will incur personal danger," replied Eleanor.

"Very true, signora," said Aldrude, "but I have luckily hit on a project that I have no doubt will succeed; for I am certain Finito is the jailor."—"And who is Finito?" inquired Eleanor.—"A very wicked fellow, whom my lord pretends to call his land-steward: he is continually prowling about the grounds, to be sure," she continued, "but I don't find that he does any good to them. Finito sleeps at the eastern part of the castle, notwithstanding we all told him, signora, it was haunted; because, as he used to say, laughing, he feared none but living

spirits,

spirits, and only wished he had nothing else to do than dead ones to encounter with, his business would then soon be dispatched. Are not those words a convincing proof, lady, that he is the man? Now then to inform you of my plot," continued Aldrude, with great eagerness, "that, as we common people say, the biter may be bit. Finito loves good liquor; and therefore, after you, signora, and my lady, are set off for Arezzo, he shall have plenty of it. The butler is very fond of me, that I know," said the conceited waiting-maid; "and so Ugo will readily enter into my scheme, I am sure. Well, then, having made this wicked Finito quite drunk, I'll get out of his pocket the keys of the prison; and if you, lady, will direct me how we are to proceed to the dungeon——" Eleanor now interrupted her by saying—"Are you not afraid (should your intention succeed) of signior Rodolphus's anger, and even revenge, on being informed

formed of the release of his prisoner?"

"No, signora," she replied; "because Finito will bear the blame. My lord has a very high opinion of my veracity, and so I shall most positively, most obstinately declare that it was not, nor could not, be any other that Finito, his own self; for that I saw him help a man that very night over the castle walls; and that he ran away as fast as his legs could carry him. My lord Rodolphus will then instantly order Finito to be hanged; and I, to clear myself of the sin committed, shall confess to the old priest of yonder monastery; and so, signora, thus will all things be put to rights, and I shall have a husband again; for I'm quite weary of being without one, that is very certain; and I dare say you are the same, lady?"

Eleanor could not supress a smile at this singular supposition of Aldrude; she however by no means approved of the duplicity intended to be carried on in effecting

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